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THE

CABINET CYCLOPÆDIA.

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A  
HISTORY OF THE FALL  
of the  
ROMAN EMPIRE.

*Comprising a View of the*  
INVASION & SETTLEMENT OF THE BARBARIANS,

by  
*A. P. L. de Cismondi.*

In two Volumes.

*VOL. I.*



London



THE  
CABINET CYCLOPÆDIA.

CONDUCTED BY THE

REV. DIONYSIUS LARDNER, LL.D. F.R.S. L. & E.

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History.

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FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE,

COMPRISING

A VIEW OF THE INVASION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE  
BARBARIANS.

BY J. C. L. DE SISMONDI.

VOL. I.

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## ERRATA.

- Page 117. line 18. before "Adolf" insert the words "Ataulphus, or."  
 149. ... 14.  
 151. ... 11. and 16. from bottom, } for "Adolf" read "Ataulphus."  
 156. ... 2. for "439" read "429."  
 168. ... 19. from bottom, the final e has fallen out from the word "degree."  
 184. ... 11. for "Siegebert" read "Siegbert."  
 203. ... in the head-line, the folio is wrongly put "303."  
 217. ... 3. from bottom, } for "523" read "533."  
 218. ... 7.  
 234. ... at the end of chapter head, "A. D. 561—613." should have been inserted.  
 275. ... 4. and 18. for "Ormouz" read "Hormouz."  
 278. ... 16. for "A. D. 610—643" read "A. D. 610—642."

# HISTORY

OF THE

## FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

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### CHAPTER I.

VALUE OF HISTORY AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE MORAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES. — DIFFICULTY AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF THOSE SCIENCES. — PERIOD OF HISTORY EMBRACED BY THE FOLLOWING WORK ; — THE STRUGGLES BETWEEN THE BARBARIANS AND THE ROMANS, THE FINAL DESTRUCTION OF THE EMPIRE OF THE WEST, AND THE SUCCEEDING DARK AGES, DOWN TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY. — EXTENT, MAGNIFICENCE, AND WEAKNESS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. — FRONTIER LINE OF THE ROMAN TERRITORY FROM THE TIME OF AUGUSTUS TO THAT OF CONSTANTINE. — WHAT IT INCLUDED. — DIVISION OF THE EMPIRE INTO FOUR PRÆTORIAL PREFECTURES. — ENUMERATION OF PROVINCES. — EXTERNAL GRANDEUR CONTRASTED WITH INTERNAL DECAY. — WANT OF NATIONAL UNITY. — STATE OF THE POPULATION. — ENORMOUS WEALTH OF THE SENATORIAL CLASS. — MISERABLE AND ABJECT CONDITION OF THE PEASANTRY AND SLAVES. — DECLINE OF POPULATION. — ENTIRE DEBASEMENT OF THE ROMAN CHARACTER.

AMONG the studies calculated to elevate the heart, or to enlighten the mind, few can be classed above that of history, when it is considered, not as a barren catalogue of incidents, persons, and dates, but as an essential part of the great system of moral and political science ; as the collection of all the facts and experiments which tend to throw light on the theory of the public weal.

The social instinct, the need of combination, is a necessary consequence of the weakness of man ; of his inability to resist, by his own unaided force, all the sufferings and the dangers by which he is perpetually surrounded. He unites with his fellow men to obtain from them that assistance which he offers to them in return ; he seeks from them a defence against the infirmities of infancy, old age, and disease ; he asks their co-operation in repelling the hostile powers of nature ; in protecting the efforts made by each for his own well-being ; in securing the enjoyment of the property he has acquired, the leisure he has earned, and the use he makes of that leisure for the developement of his moral existence. Two objects perfectly distinct present themselves to his mind as soon as he is capable of reflecting ; first, the satisfaction and happiness he can enjoy with the faculties with which he feels himself endowed ; secondly, the improvement of those faculties, and his progress towards a more perfect state of being. He seeks not only to be happy ; he seeks to render himself worthy of happiness of a more exalted nature. Happiness and virtue are the twofold end, — first, of all the individual efforts of man ; secondly, of all his combined efforts. He seeks in his family, in his class, in his country, the means of making this twofold progress ; nor can any association completely fulfil his wishes. unless it place these means within his reach.

The theory of these associations, that theory of universal utility, is what has sometimes been designated as the social science ; sometimes denoted by the name of the moral and political sciences.

Considered in its full extension, moral science embraces all that human society can effect for the general advantage, and for the moral developement of man : considered in its various branches, we may number among moral and political sciences, constitutional polity, legislation, the science of administration, political economy, the science of war and of national defence, the science of education, and, lastly, the most

profound and important of all, that of the moral education of the mature man—religion.

With all these sciences, some of them of a speculative nature, history is inseparably connected, as forming the practical part, the common register of the phenomena and experiments of all these sciences. We know that the mere name of politics suggests recollections often bitter or afflicting; and that many cannot regard, without a kind of terror, the study of a science which, to their imaginations, is characterised much more by the animosities it has engendered than by the good it has produced.

Before, however, we declare our aversion for political science, let us remember that such an aversion would imply indifference to the happiness, the intelligence, and the virtue of the human race.

On the one hand, it is necessary to discover how the superior intellectual powers and resources of the few can be best employed for the improvement and advantage of all; how virtue can best be honoured, vice most effectually discouraged, and crime prevented; how, even in the punishment of crime, the greatest sum of good can be secured to society with the greatest economy of evil. On the other hand, it is important to know how wealth is created and distributed; how the physical comforts which that wealth procures can be diffused over the greatest possible number of persons; how it may be made available to their enjoyments;—questions intimately affecting not only the common weal, but the domestic comfort and prosperity; the happiness of the interior of every house and of every family. After such a survey of the topics lying within the domain of political science, who will dare to say that he detests it? who will dare to say that he despises it?

But is this science, important as it must be admitted to be in its aim, this science so intimately connected with all that is most noble in the destiny of man, is it as unerring as it is important and elevated? Does it really lead us to that goal to which it affects to

direct, our efforts? Are its principles established in such a manner that they can never be shaken? We must confess that this is very far from being the case. Social science is divided into a great number of branches, each of which amply suffices to occupy the life of the most studious man. But there is not one of these branches in which rival sects have not sprung up; in which they do not contest the first principles on which all their doctrines are founded. In speculative politics, liberals and serviles dispute the fundamental basis of society. In legislation, the schools of law have not been less opposed to each other; the one always looks to what has been, the other, to what ought to be; and in the countries which have adopted the Roman law, as well as in those which assume custom as the groundwork of their legislation, these two parties are in open hostility. In political economy, contradictory doctrines are maintained with equal warmth as to the very basis of the science; and the two contending parties are not yet got beyond the question, whether the increase of production, or of population, be always a good, or whether they be sometimes an evil. In the theory of education, all the means of diffusing instruction, nay, the advantage of instruction itself, are still disputed points; and there are still persons to be found who recommend ignorance as the surest guardian of the virtue and the happiness of the mass of mankind. The most sublime of social sciences, the most beneficent (when it attains its end), — religion, is also the most fruitful of controversy and debate; and the hostile sects too often transform a bond of peace and love into a weapon of aggression and hostility. Never, perhaps, were principles more continually and warmly appealed to, in all the social sciences, than in this age; never were principles more misunderstood; never was it more impossible to enounce a single one with the hope of its obtaining universal assent.

This is not the case with regard to the other subjects of our knowledge: physical facts, and the first princi-



ples which are deduced from them, are universally established and recognised. In what are called the natural sciences, we proceed from proof to proof; and if some long admitted explanatory theory is sometimes contested, the greater part of the discoveries in the field of physics are not the less safe from all controversy. In fact, in the moral sciences, our doubts are far less directed against the forms of argumentation, than against the facts from which we affect to draw our conclusions. Among these facts there is scarcely one sufficiently firmly established to serve as a groundwork for principles. This is easily accounted for, if we consider, that in the physical sciences the facts are scientific experiments made with a definite purpose, and circumscribed by that purpose: whereas, in the moral and political sciences, the facts are the independent and infinitely varied actions of human beings.

Ought we, however, to suffer ourselves to be utterly discouraged by the afflicting uncertainty which hangs about every part of moral and political science? Ought we, because truth has not yet been demonstrated, to renounce the search after it? Ought we to abandon all hope of finding it? Were we even to wish it, we could not. These sciences are of such daily application to the events and objects of life, that we cannot set a step without recurring to their aid. We may renounce the search after speculative truth, but we cannot cease to act. Since, however, every one of our actions reacts on our fellow men, every one ought to be regulated by the grand laws of human association—by those very moral and political sciences which some persons affect to despise.

When the astronomers of antiquity placed the earth in the centre of the universe, and made the sun rise and the firmament revolve around it, their error could only extend to paper spheres; the celestial bodies moved on their glorious course, undisturbed by the systems of Ptolemy or of Tycho Brahe. Galileo himself, when compelled by the holy office to abjure his sublime theory,

could not help exclaiming, "*Eppur' si muove!*" The inquisition might stop the progress of the human mind, but could not arrest the revolution of the earth. But even were the study of the moral and political sciences utterly prohibited, their practice could not be suspended for a single moment. There are nations in which the theory of government has never formed a subject of reflection or of discussion ; but have they therefore found it possible to dispense with all government? No : they have adopted at random some one of the systems which they ought to have chosen after mature deliberation. Whether in Morocco or in Athens, in Venice or in Uri, at Constantinople or at London, men have, doubtless, always desired that their governments should facilitate their way to virtue and to happiness. All have the same end in view, and all act. Must they act without regard to this end? Must they walk without endeavouring to ascertain whether they advance or recede? It is impossible to propose to any sovereign, or to any council, measures—whether political, military, administrative, financial, or religious, from which good or evil will not result to masses of men ; which, consequently, ought not to be judged in accordance with social science. Determinations the most multifold, the most important, must be made in one direction or another ;—is it necessary they should always be made blindfold? And if we prefer what we have, if we resolve to stop where we are, that also is just as much choice as the contrary line of action. Must we then always choose without knowing why we choose? The social sciences are obscure—let us then seek to throw light upon them : they are uncertain—let us endeavour to fix them : they are speculative—let us try to establish them on experience. This is our duty as men—the law which ought to regulate all our conduct—the principle of the good or the evil we may do : indifference on such questions is a crime.

In order to carry the social sciences to their utmost extent, it is unquestionably necessary to divide them ; to direct the whole force of a speculative mind to one

single branch, as the only means of pushing the knowledge of details and the concatenation or sequence of principles, as far as human infirmity will permit. A man who sincerely desires the advancement of the science to which he mainly addicts himself, must content himself with excellence in that science ; — be it the science of government, of jurisprudence, of political economy, of morals, or of education. But since all men are subject to the operation of the social sciences ; since all, in turn, exercise some influence over their fellow men ; since all judge and are judged, it is of importance that all should arrive at certain general results : it is of importance that all should understand and appreciate the consequences of human institutions and human actions. These consequences are to be found in history.

History is the general storehouse of the experiments which have been made in all the social sciences. Unquestionably, the physical sciences — chemistry, agriculture, medicine, are experimental ; so are legislation, political economy, finance, war, education, religion. Experience alone can teach us how far what has been invented to serve, to unite, to defend, to enlighten human society, to raise the moral dignity of man, or to augment his enjoyments, has attained its end, or has produced a contrary effect.

But there remains an important difference. In the physical sciences we *make* experiments ; in the moral and political, we can only wait and watch for them. We must take them such as they have been furnished to us by past ages ; we can neither choose nor direct them ; for an abortive experiment involves destruction to the virtue and the happiness of our fellow men ; and not of a few individuals only, but of thousands or millions of men. We know of but one example of a project for the advancement of political science by means of experiments, undertaken with the express aim, not of the interests of the governed, but of the instruction of the governors.

About the year 260 of the Christian era, the em-

peror Gallienus, one of those in the long line of Cæsars who, perhaps, by his indolence and his levity, contributed the most to the ruin of the Roman empire, took it into his head that he was a philosopher ; and of course found the high opinion he had formed of his taste and aptitude for science amply confirmed by the testimony of his courtiers : he accordingly resolved to select certain cities of the empire as experimental communities, to be submitted to the various forms of government and polity invented by philosophers, with a view to the increase of the sum of human happiness. In one, the philosopher Plotinus was commissioned to organise a republic on Plato's model. Meanwhile the barbarians advanced ; the thoughtless Gallienus opposed no resistance ; and they successively devastated all the countries in which the experimental cities were to be founded. Thus vanished this imperial dream.

Unquestionably no man has a right thus to make human beings the subject of experiment ; yet a Roman emperor might be nearly sure that any theory of any philosopher would be better than the practice of his pretorian prefects, or his governors ; and we have reason to regret that Gallienus's singular project was abandoned. But for all, save a Roman emperor, the experimental study of the social sciences can be made in the past alone ; there, the results of all institutions stand disclosed before us, though unhappily so complicated, so embarrassed in each other, that neither causes nor effects present themselves distinctly to our eyes. Generally, they are severed by a long interval of time ; we must look back several generations for the origin of the opinions, the passions, the weaknesses, the consequences of which become manifest after the lapse of ages.

Often, too, these long-existing causes have been inadequately observed, and many are veiled in darkness which it is absolutely impossible to penetrate. But the main source of the confusion and uncertainty which hang around moral or political science is, that several causes always concur to produce one effect ; that, fre-

quently, it is even necessary to seek in another branch of political science the origin of a phenomenon which presents itself to us in the one which presently engages our attention. We are struck by the tactics of the Romans ; but perhaps it is rather to the education they received from their earliest infancy, than to the perfection of military science, that we ought to ascribe their success in war. We wish to adopt the English trial by jury ; perhaps it will be found to be devoid of equity or of independence, if it be not supported by the religious opinion of the country. We talk of the fidelity of the Austrians to their government ; perhaps their attachment is not to the government, but to the economical laws which are in force among them. We ought not, therefore, to be surprised if the social sciences are in a backward state ; if their principles are uncertain ; if they do not offer a single question which has not been the subject of controversy. They are sciences of fact, and there is not a single one of the facts on which they are founded which some one is not disposed to deny. They are sciences of observation ; and how few are the accurate or complete observations which have as yet been collected for the purposes of induction. We ought rather to be surprised that men should hate and insult each other for what they understand so imperfectly. There is, perhaps, not one denomination of a sect, whether in politics, philosophy, or religion, which has not, at some time or other, become a term of reproach. There has not been one opinion, of the many held on subjects so difficult, so complicated, by men who had no other end in view than the good of their species, which has not in turn been anathematised, and the profession of it treated as evidence of dishonesty and vice. Poor apprentices as we are in the theory of social existence, how dare we to affirm that the adoption of this or that principle proves a corrupt heart, when we cannot even demonstrate that it shows an error of judgment ? Let us study : thus only shall we learn the extent of our ignorance. Let us study ; and by learning to appreciate the difficul-

ties, we shall learn to conceive how they may have given birth to systems the most widely opposed.

History, however profoundly studied, will still, perhaps, leave us in doubt as to the rules which ought to regulate our own conduct, or our share in the general conduct of society, of which we are members ; but it will leave us none as to the boundless indulgence we owe to the opinions of other men. When we see that science is so complicated ; that truth is so far removed from us, so shrouded from our ken ; that every step in our work offers fresh difficulties to our investigation, raises fresh questions for solution ; when we are not sure of our own footing, how shall we pronounce sentence on those who differ from us ?

Our purpose in the following work is not to establish any particular system ; not to maintain or to demolish any set of opinions, principles, or institutions ; but honestly to demand of the past an account of what has existed, and of the causes which have combined to bring it into existence. The portion of history of which we shall endeavour to give a rapid sketch is, indeed, more rich in instructive warnings than in glorious examples.

In the first two centuries of the Christian era, the known world was united under an almost universal monarchy, and seemed to have within its reach all the fruits of the highest civilisation to which antiquity had attained. Commencing our researches at this period, we shall endeavour to point out the germs of destruction which this immense body contained within itself. We shall then give a brief view of the mighty struggle between the barbarians and the Romans, and shall show the empire of the West crumbling to pieces under reiterated strokes. The barbarians then endeavoured to reconstruct what they had destroyed. The Merovingian Franks, the Saracens, the Carolingian Franks, and the Saxons, laboured in turn at the establishment of a universal monarchy. Their efforts contributed still farther to the dissolution of the ancient order of society, and buried civilisation under the ruins. The empires of

Dagobert, of the Khalifs, of Charlemagne, and of Otho the Great, fell in succession before the end of the tenth century. These great convulsions at length destroyed the tendency which mankind seemed to have preserved toward the reconstruction of a universal monarchy. At the end of the tenth century, human society had resolved itself into its primary elements—associations of citizens in towns and cities. We shall take our stand at the year 1000, on the dust of the successive empires of antiquity. That is the true epoch whence modern history ought to date.

The period of barbarism and destruction which we design to examine is little generally known. The greater number of readers hasten to turn their eyes from so dark and troubled a picture; nor, through its whole duration, does it afford a single author worthy to be placed on the same rank with the great writers of antiquity. The confusion of facts; our incurable ignorance concerning a great number of details, concerning some entire periods, concerning many of the causes which gave rise to the most important revolutions; the absence of philosophy, often of good sense, in those who relate events; the enormous number of crimes by which this period is deformed, and the extremity of wretchedness to which the human race was reduced, unquestionably detract much from the interest which its history might otherwise excite. These circumstances ought not, however, to deter us from endeavouring to obtain a more accurate knowledge of it.

Indeed, the period which it is our intention to consider is much more nearly allied to our own than that which we are accustomed to study with the greatest ardour. It is nearer to us, not only in the order of dates, but also in that of interests. We are the children of the men whose history and character we are about to examine: we are not the descendants of the Greeks or of the Romans. With them arose the tongues we speak; the laws which we have obeyed, or whose authority we still acknowledge; the opinions, the prejudices,



more powerful than laws, before which we bow, and which will, perhaps, retain their dominion over our latest posterity. The nations and tribes who will pass in review before us, professed the Christian religion; but in this respect the difference is far more striking than the resemblance. The centuries which elapsed from the fourth to the tenth are those in which the church was the most deeply affected by the fatal influences of ignorance, of increasing barbarism, and of worldly ambition. In them we can hardly trace a vestige of the pure religion we now profess. The direction given to the education of youth, the study of a language then expiring and now no longer in existence, and of the master-works it contained, date from the same epoch; as do also the establishment of various universities and schools, which keep alive in Europe the spirit of past ages. Lastly, it was at that period that the states of modern Europe, many of which still subsist, were constructed out of the ruins of the Roman empire. We are about to watch the birth of the nations to which we are bound by the various ties of blood and interest.

The fall of the Roman empire in the West is the first spectacle that presents itself to us, and is pregnant with instruction. Nations or tribes which have attained to a like degree of civilisation perceive that a certain kindred subsists between them. The life of a private citizen in the time of Constantine or of Theodosius has a greater resemblance to our own than that of our barbarous ancestors of Germany, or than that of those virtuous and austere citizens of the republics of Greece and Italy, whose works we admire, but of whose manners we have a very imperfect knowledge. It is only by acquiring an accurate conception of the resemblance and the difference between the organisation of the empire and that of modern Europe, that we can venture to foretel whether the calamities by which the former was destroyed, menace us with ruin.

The mere name of the Roman empire calls up in our minds every image of grandeur, power, and magnifi-



cence. By a very natural confusion of ideas, we bring together the most remote, and often dissimilar times, to concentrate around it a halo of splendour and glory. The Roman republic had produced men who, in moral dignity and force, were, perhaps, never surpassed on earth. They had transmitted their names, if not their virtues, to their descendants ; and even to the very close of the empire, the men who, sunk in slavery and baseness, still called themselves Roman citizens, seemed to live in the midst of their shades, and to be encompassed by the atmosphere of their glory. The laws had changed their spirit ; but the changes had been slow, and scarcely perceptible to the people : the manners were no longer the same ; but the memory of the antique virtue of Rome still survived. The literature had been preserved with the language ; and it established a community of opinions, of emotions, of prejudices, between the Romans of the time of Claudian and the contemporaries of Virgil. The magistrates and officers of the state had, generally speaking, preserved their ancient names and insignia, although their power had fled. And nine hundred years after the institution of the consulates, the people of Rome still respected the fasces of the lictors, who preceded the consul, habited in the purple of his office.

From the time of Augustus to that of Constantine the world of Rome was bounded by nearly the same frontiers. The god Terminus had not yet learned to recede, and still guarded the ancient boundaries, as in the days of the republic. To this there was but one exception. Dacia, conquered by Trajan, lying to the north of the Danube, and without the natural limits of the empire, was abandoned, after being held for a century and a half. But the aggressive warfare which the Romans of the first century were continually pushing beyond their frontiers, was, in the fourth, almost invariably retaliated upon them within their own territory by the barbarians whom they had formerly attacked. The emperors could no longer defend the

provinces which they still affected to rule ; and they frequently saw, without regret, valiant enemies become their guests, and occupy the desert regions of their empire.

This fixedness of the boundaries of the territory subject to Rome, was in part to be ascribed to the sagacity with which, at the period of her highest power, her leaders had voluntarily stopped short in the career of conquest, at the point where they found the best military frontier. Great rivers, which afford little obstacle to the armies of civilised nations, are generally a barrier against the incursions of barbarians ; and great rivers, the sea, mountains, deserts, formed, in fact, natural frontiers to this immense empire.

According to a vague calculation, it has been asserted that the Roman territory measured six hundred leagues from north to south, upwards of a thousand from east to west, and extended over a surface of a hundred and eighty thousand square leagues. But the idea conveyed by numbers is too abstract to leave any distinct picture on the mind. We shall understand more clearly the immense extent of its possessions in the richest and most fertile countries in the world, by following the line of its frontiers. On the north, the empire was bounded by the wall of the Caledonians or Picts, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Black Sea. The Picts' wall, which transected Scotland at its narrowest point, left the Romans in possession of the Lowlands of that country, and of the whole of England. The Rhine and the Danube, which rise at nearly the same point, and take their course, the one to the west, the other to the east, separated barbaric from civilised Europe. The Rhine formed the frontier of Gaul, which then comprised Helvetia and Belgium. The Danube covered the two great peninsulas of Italy and Illyricum. It divided countries, some of which are now regarded as Germanic, others as Slavonic. On its right bank the Romans possessed Rhætia, Noricum, Pannonia, and Mœsia ; which answer pretty nearly to Suabia, Bavaria, part of

Austria and of Hungary, and Bulgaria. The narrow space between the sources of the Danube and the Rhine, above Basel, was defended by a line of fortifications. The Black Sea protected Asia Minor. To the north and east, a few Greek colonies preserved a doubtful sort of independence, under the protection of the empire. A Greek prince reigned at Caffa, on the Cimmerian Bosphorus. Greek colonies in the countries of Lazica or Colchis were alternately subject or tributary. The Romans possessed the whole southern bank of the Black Sea, from the mouths of the Danube to Trebisonde.

On the east, the empire was bounded by the mountains of Armenia, by a part of the course of the Euphrates, and by the deserts of Arabia. One of the loftiest mountain-ranges of the globe, the Caucasian, stretching from the Black Sea to the Caspian, touching Thibet at one extremity, and at the other the mountains of the centre of Asia Minor, separated the Scythians of Upper Asia from the Persians and the Romans. The wildest part of these mountains belonged to the Iberians, who maintained their independence. The part the most susceptible of cultivation was inhabited by the Armenians, who submitted alternately to the yoke of the Romans, the Parthians, and the Persians, but as tributaries rather than as subjects. The Tigris and the Euphrates, which rise in the Armenian mountains, and empty themselves into the Persian Gulf, flowed through the plains of Mesopotamia. Along the whole of this part of the eastern boundary, down to the sandy deserts which, farther to the south, divide the banks of the Euphrates from the fertile hills of Syria, the frontiers of the empire had not been traced by the hand of nature ; and we accordingly see the two great monarchies of the Romans and of the Parthians, or their successors, the Persians, alternately wresting from each other several of the provinces of Armenia or of Mesopotamia. The deserts of Arabia formed the defence of Syria along a line of two hundred leagues, while the Red Sea bounded Egypt.

To the south, the deserts of Libya and Zahara ; to the west, the Atlantic Ocean, were at once the limits of the Roman empire and of the habitable globe.

Having traced the frontier line of the empire, we will pause for a moment over the catalogue of the provinces of which it consisted. About the year 292, Diocletian had divided it into four pretorian prefectures, with a view to provide better for its defence, by giving it four heads or leaders. These prefectures were Gaul, Illyricum, Italy, and the East. The residence of the prefect of Gaul was at Trèves. He had under his orders the three vicars of the Gallic provinces, Spain, and Britain. The former were divided, according to the ancient language of the inhabitants, into Narbonese, Aquitanian, Celtic, Belgic, and Germanic Gaul. Spain was divided into three provinces, Lusitania, Bætica, and Tarraconia. Lastly, Britain comprehended the whole island, as far north as the Friths of Forth and Clyde.

The Illyrian prefecture consisted of that immense triangle of which the Danube is the base, and the Adriatic and the Ægean and Euxine seas the two sides. It comprehended nearly the whole existing empire of Austria, and the whole of Turkey in Europe. It was divided into the provinces of Rhætia, Noricum, and Pannonia ; Dalmatia, Mœsia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece. The prefect resided at Sirmium, not far from Belgrade and from the Danube, or at Thessalonica.

The prefecture of Italy included, besides that province whence the conquerors of the world had sprung, the whole of Africa, from the western frontiers of Egypt to the present empire of Morocco. The provinces bore the names of Libya, Africa, Numidia, Cæsarian Mauritania, and Tingitanian Mauritania. Rome and Milan were alternately the residence of the prefect of Italy, but Carthage was the capital of all the African provinces. It equalled Rome in population as well as in magnificence ; and in the time of their prosperity, the African provinces alone were more than equal to three times the territory of France.

The prefecture of the East, bounded by the Black Sea, the kingdom of Persia, and the Desert, was yet more extensive, more wealthy, and more populous than either of the others. It contained the provinces of Asia Minor, Bithynia, and Pontus; Cilicia, Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine; Egypt, with a part of Colchis, of Armenia, of Mesopotamia, and of Arabia. The residence of the prefect was at Antioch, but several other capitals, particularly Alexandria in Egypt, almost rivalled that city in population and in wealth.

The imagination is confounded by this enumeration of the provinces of Rome; by the comparison of them with any existing empires; and our astonishment is heightened when we call to mind the vast and splendid cities by which each of these provinces was adorned; cities, several of which equalled, if they did not surpass, our largest capitals in population and in opulence; cities such as Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, within whose walls a whole nation seemed enclosed. The Gallic provinces alone numbered one hundred and fifteen towns distinguished by the name of cities. The ruins of some are yet standing, and surpass all those of modern times in magnificence.

The aspect of these ruins still excites our admiration, even when we meet with them in provinces where they are not associated with any glorious recollections. At Nismes we behold the *Maison carrée*, the *Arenæ*, the *Pont du Gard*, with reverential emotion. With the same feelings we visit the remains of Roman grandeur at Arles and Narbonne: yet what do we find there, except models of art? No great historical recollections are attached to them: these noble edifices were raised at a time when Rome had lost its liberty, its virtues, and its glory. When we succeed in fixing the date of their construction, we find it during the reign of emperors whose names have been handed down to the execration of all successive generations.

Nevertheless, these monuments, even in the most remote provinces, the most obscure cities, still bear the

antique Roman stamp — the stamp of vastness and magnificence. Moral habits and impressions are sometimes perpetuated in works of art, even after they are obliterated from the soul of the artist. Even at the latest periods of the decline of the empire, the Roman artist lived surrounded by the time-hallowed witnesses of the past, which kept him in the right path; he felt himself compelled to work for eternity. He continued to impress on his creations that character of power and durability, which give them a preeminence over all that have succeeded them. The imposing architecture of Rome has a strength and a grandeur which remind us of that of Upper Egypt. It differs from that, however, in its object: the Egyptians laboured only for their gods — the Romans, even during the period of their enslavement, worked mainly for the people. All their great edifices were evidently intended for the enjoyment of all. In the times of the republic, the chief object was the public utility, to which the aqueducts and magnificent roads of that period were destined to contribute. In the days of the empire, it was rather the public pleasure that was consulted: the result was, circuses and theatres. Even in the temples, the Egyptian architect seems to have thought only of the presence of the Deity — the Roman, of the adoration of the people.

In the midst of all this magnificence, the empire, whose fall we are about to contemplate, was lingering in its fourth century of incurable decay. The north poured down upon it her flood of warriors. From the extremity of Scandinavia to the frontiers of China, nation after nation appeared, the new pressing upon the older-settled, crushing it, and marking its onward passage with blood and devastation. The calamities which afflicted the human race at that period exceed, in extent of desolation, in number of victims, in intensity of suffering, all that has ever been presented to our affrighted imagination. We dare not calculate the millions upon millions of human beings who perished before the downfall of the Roman empire was accom-

plished. Yet its ruin was not caused by the barbarians: it had long been corroded by an internal ulcer. Various causes had, doubtless, contributed to destroy, among the subjects of the Cæsars, the patriotism of the people, the military virtues, the opulence of the provinces, and the means of resistance. But we shall now confine ourselves to an endeavour to elucidate those which arose from the state of the population; since upon that must repose every system of national defence.

That sentiment so pure, so elevated, that public virtue which sometimes soars to the highest pitch of heroism, and renders the citizen capable of the most noble sacrifices; that patriotism which had long been the glory and the power of Rome, found no food in the empire of the world. An edict of Caracalla (A. D. 211-217) had rendered common to all the inhabitants of the empire, not only the prerogatives, but the titles and the duties, of a Roman citizen. Thus the Gaul and the Briton were nominally the fellow-citizens of the Mauritanian and the Syrian; the Greek and the Egyptian, of the Spaniard and the Hun. It is evident, however, that the more such a faggot is enlarged, the looser is the tie that binds it. What glory or distinction could attach to a prerogative become so common? What recollections could be awakened by the name of country? a name no longer endeared by any local image, by any association of ideas, by any participation in all that had thrown radiance and glory around the social body?

Thus national recollections, national feelings, were obliterated in imperial Rome. They were feebly replaced by two distinctions between the inhabitants of the empire; that of language, and that of rank.

Language is the most powerful symbol to a nation of its own unity: it is blended with every association of the mind; it lends its colour to every feeling and to every thought; it forms an indivisible part of our memory, of all that has made us love life, of all that has taught us to know happiness. When it reveals to us a fellow-countryman in the midst of a strange people, it makes



our heart beat with all the emotions of home and fatherland. But, so far from serving as a bond of union between the citizens of the Roman empire, language only served to sever them. A great division between the Greek and the Latin soon placed the empires of the East and of the West in opposition. These two tongues, which had already shone in the zenith of their literary glory, had been adopted by the governments, by the wealthy classes, by all who pretended to education, and by most of the citizens of the great towns. Latin was spoken in the Gallic prefecture, in Africa, Italy, and half of the Illyrian prefecture, and along the Danube ; Greek, in all the southern portion of the Illyrian prefecture, and throughout the prefecture of the East.

But the great mass of the rural population, except in spots cultivated exclusively by slaves brought from a distance, had preserved its provincial language. Thus, Celtic was spoken throughout Armorica and the island of Britain ; Illyrian, in the greater part of Illyricum ; Syrian, Coptic, Armenian, in the several provinces whence these languages had taken their names. Where the people were the most enslaved and oppressed, they made the greatest efforts to learn the language of their masters ; the latter, on the contrary, had to make the advances, where the people were the most numerous and strong. Throughout the empire, however, there was a continual shifting of the population, from the immense traffic in slaves, from the military service, and from the pursuit of civil offices. Hence every province presented, in the lower classes, the strangest mixture of various *patois* and dialects. Thus, in Gaul, we know that, towards the end of the fifth century, Saxon was spoken at Bayeux, Tartarian in the district of Tifauge in Poitou, Gaelic at Vannes, Alan at Orleans, Frankic at Tournai, and Gothic at Tours ; and every century affords a fresh combination.

But it is more especially in the condition of individuals, that we must seek the causes of the extreme



weakness of the Roman empire. We may distinguish six classes of inhabitants. First, we shall find senatorial families, proprietors of immense territories and immense wealth, who had successively encroached on the possessions of all the smaller landed proprietors. Secondly, the inhabitants of large towns, a mixture of artizans and freed slaves, who lived on the luxury of the rich, and shared in their corruption; who made themselves formidable to the government by their revolts,—never to the enemy by their valour in the field. The inhabitants of small towns, poor, despised, and oppressed. The husbandmen and the slaves, who tilled the fields. Lastly, a sort of banditti, who, as a means of escaping from oppression, betook themselves to the woods, and lived a life of brigandage.

The higher classes of a nation may impress upon the government a character of wisdom and virtue, if themselves are wise and virtuous; but they cannot give it strength, for strength must always come from the mass. But in imperial Rome this mass, so varied in its language, its manners, its religion, its habits; so savage in the midst of civilisation; so oppressed and brutified, was scarcely perceived by those who lived on its toils: it is hardly mentioned by historians; it pined in wretchedness, it perished and disappeared in some provinces, while no one condescended to notice its extinction; and it is only by a series of comparisons that we can discover its fate. In the present state of Europe, the class of husbandmen—those who live by the manual labour of agriculture—forms four fifths of the whole population, England alone excepted. We may conclude that, in the Roman empire, the agricultural population was proportionally larger, since manufactures and commerce were in a less advanced state than with us. But, whatever were their numbers, they formed no part of the nation. They were regarded as scarcely superior to the domestic animals whose labours they shared. The higher classes would have dreaded to hear them pronounce the name of country; dreaded to call

forth their moral or intellectual faculties ; above all, that courage which they might have turned against their oppressors. The peasantry were rigorously deprived of arms, and were incapacitated from contributing to the defence of their country, or from opposing resistance to any enemy, foreign or domestic.

The rural population of the empire was divided into two classes, free *coloni* and slaves ; differing, however, far more in name than in any positive rights. The former cultivated the earth for certain fixed wages, generally paid in kind ; but, as they were severed from their masters by an impassable distance ; as they were immediately dependent on some favourite slave or free-man ; as their complaints were unheard, and the law afforded them no security, their condition became more and more deplorable ; the payment exacted from them more and more ruinous : and if, rendered desperate by misery, they abandoned their fields, their dwellings, their family, and fled to take refuge under the protection of some other proprietor, the constitutions of the emperors had provided a summary process by which they could be reclaimed, and seized wherever they were found. Such was the condition of the free cultivators of the soil.

The slaves were again subdivided into two classes ; those who were born on their master's estate, — and who, having consequently no other place of abode, no other home or country, inspired a larger share of confidence, — and those who had been purchased. The former lived in huts, in the farm-buildings or homesteads, under the eyes of their inspector or bailiff, nearly like the negroes on a West India estate. But, as their numbers were continually decreasing from bad treatment, from the avarice of their superiors, from misery and despair, a continual and active trade was carried on throughout the empire to recruit them from among the prisoners of war. The victories of the Roman arms, — frequently, also, the conflicts of the barbarians among each other, or the punishments inflicted by the emperors or their

lieutenants on revolted cities or provinces, the whole population of which was sold under the spear of the prætor,—kept the market constantly supplied with slaves; but at the expense of all that would have been the most valuable part of the population. These wretched beings worked almost constantly with chains on their feet: they were worn down with fatigue, in order to crush their spirit, and were shut up nightly in subterraneous holes.

The frightful sufferings of so large a portion of the population, its bitter hatred against its oppressors, produced their natural consequences; continual servile insurrections, plots, assassinations, and poisonings. In vain did a sanguinary law condemn to death all the slaves of a master who had been assassinated; vengeance and despair multiplied crime and violence. Those who had already satisfied their revenge, those who had failed in their attempt to do so, but over whose head suspicion hung, fled to the forests and lived by rapine and plunder. In Gaul and Spain they were called *Bagaudæ*, in Asia Minor they were confounded with the *Isauri*; in Africa with the *Gætuli*, who pursued the same course of life. Their numbers were so considerable, that their attacks frequently assumed the character of civil war, rather than of the violences of a band of robbers. They were like the *Marroons* of the *West India Islands*. By their irruptions they aggravated the miseries of those who were lately their companions in misfortune. Whole districts, whole provinces, were successively abandoned by the cultivators, and forest and heath usurped the place of corn and pasture.

The wealthy senator sometimes obtained compensation for his losses, or the aid of the authorities in defence of his property; but the small land-owner, who cultivated his own field, could not escape amid so much violence and outrage. His fortune and his life were in continual danger. He hastened, therefore, to get rid of his patrimony at any price, whenever he could find an opulent neighbour willing to buy it; nay, he frequently aban-

done it without any compensation. Often he was driven from it by fiscal exactions, and the overwhelming weight of the public charges. Thus the whole of this independent class, among whom love of country exists in peculiar force and intensity, whose vigorous arm is best able to defend the soil it tills, was soon entirely extirpated. The number of proprietors diminished to such a degree, that an opulent man, a man of senatorial family, had often a distance of ten leagues to traverse before he could reach the habitation of a neighbour and equal. Some of them, proprietors of whole provinces, were accordingly already regarded as petty sovereigns.

In the midst of this general desolation, the existence of large cities is a phenomenon not easily explained; but we find the same extraordinary state of things in our own times, in Barbary, Turkey, throughout the East;—wherever, in short, despotism crushes isolated man, and where he can only find safety from outrage by losing himself in a crowd. These great cities were, in a great measure, peopled by artizans, who were subjected to a very rigorous yoke; and by freed-men and slaves; but it is to be remembered, that they also contained a greater number of persons who were satisfied with bare necessities, provided they could pass their time in utter indolence, than are to be found in our days. The whole of this population was, like the peasantry, disarmed; was equally deprived of the feeling of country, was rendered equally fearful of the enemy; equally incapable of self-defence. But, as it was congregated into a mass, it commanded some respect from those in power. In all the cities of the first class, there were gratuitous distributions of provisions, and gratuitous games, chariot races, and theatrical exhibitions. The levity, the love of pleasure, the forgetfulness of the future, which have always characterised the populace of large cities, clung to the provincial Romans through all the final calamities of the empire. Trèves, the capital of the Gallic prefecture, was not the only city which was surprised and pillaged

by the barbarians, while its citizens, crowned with chaplets, were rapturously applauding the games of the circus.

Such was the interior of the empire at the beginning of the fourth century ; such was the population called upon to resist the universal invasion of the barbarians, who often left them no other choice than that of dying with arms in their hands, or dying like slaves and cowards. And the descendants of those haughty and daring Romans, the heirs of such high renown, acquired by so many virtues, had been so enfeebled, so debased and degraded by the tyranny to which they had been subjected, that, when this alternative was offered them, they constantly preferred the death of cowards and of slaves.

## CHAP. II.

THREE FIRST CENTURIES OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. — FROM THE BATTLE OF ACTIUM TO THE REIGN OF CONSTANTINE. — UNINTERRUPTED PROGRESS OF DECAY. — THESE THREE CENTURIES DIVIDED INTO FOUR PERIODS: 1. OF THE JULIAN RACE; 2. OF THE FLAVIAN; 3. OF THE SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE; 4. OF THE COLLEAGUES, OR CO-EMPERORS. — STATE OF ROME UNDER THE JULIAN FAMILY. — LIMITS OF THE EMPIRE NEARLY UNCHANGED. — MILITARY FORCE. — ARTS. — LITERATURE. — DEGRADED STATE OF THE PEOPLE. — VIRTUOUS EMPERORS OF THE FLAVIAN RACE. — OPULENCE AND SPLENDOUR OF THE PROVINCIAL CITIES. — INCREASING DISPROPORTION BETWEEN THE WEALTH OF THE FEW<sup>d</sup> AND THE MISERY OF THE MASS. — RAPID DIMINUTION OF POPULATION. — DIFFICULTY OF RECRUITING THE ARMIES. — DEATH OF COMMODUS. — COMMENCEMENT OF THIRD PERIOD. — TYRANNY AND RAPACITY OF THE PRÆTORIANS. — CIVIL WARS. — ASSASSINATIONS. — SUCCESSFUL INVASION OF BARBARIANS. — JUDICIOUS MILITARY ELECTIONS. — DIOCLETIAN. — DIVISION OF THE EMPIRE BY HIM INTO FOUR PREFECTURES, GOVERNED BY TWO AUGUSTI AND TWO CÆSARS.

IN the preceding chapter we have endeavoured to show what was the condition, what were the internal circumstances, of the Roman empire at the beginning of the fourth century; but, in order to the understanding of the events which followed, it will be necessary briefly to recall to the memory of our readers by what steps, by what series of revolutions, the empire reached that point of decline of which we have tried to convey some idea. The space assigned to this work will render it necessary to condense into one chapter three centuries and a half of the existence of the civilised world; three centuries and a half prolific in great events and in great men, many of whom have, probably, already a powerful hold on the imagination of our readers. In a work professedly treating of the middle ages, it is impossible to trace the long decay of the empire which preceded the reign of Constantine, since that reign

must be the point from which we start. Perhaps, however, by strongly marking the epochs of this long history, by classifying the events and the princes which give it its character and its direction, by thus reviving the recollections which are associated in the minds of our readers with their earlier studies, we may succeed in enabling them to embrace with a glance the period which we must leave behind us, but which exercised a powerful influence over that which we are about to follow out in greater detail.

The power of an individual had been definitively established over the Roman world by the victory which Octavius, better known under the name of Augustus, obtained over Marc Anthony at Actium, on the second of September in the year 723 of Rome—thirty years before the birth of Christ. Constantine the Great, with whom we shall begin our narrative, was invested with the purple in Gaul, A. D. 306; but he was not acknowledged by the whole empire until the year 323—three hundred and fifty-three years after the battle of Actium.

During this long space of time, the feebleness and exhaustion of the Roman empire made gradual and uninterrupted progress. This empire, which had threatened the whole earth with subjugation, which had united civilisation to extent, wealth to military virtue, talents to strength, advanced towards its downfall, but with unequal steps; its infirmities were not always the same, and the calamities which threatened it changed their character and aspect. It suffered alternately from the two extremes of the excess and the dissolution of power: it paid the penalty even of its prosperity. Without minutely following the history of its domestic tyrannies, or its foreign wars, let us endeavour to trace this change in its character in the series of events.

These three centuries and a half may be divided into four periods, each of which had its peculiar vices, its characteristic weaknesses; each of which contributed, though in a different manner, to the grand work of

destruction which was going on. We shall designate them after the names or the characters of the chiefs of the empire; since the whole power of Rome was then lodged in the hands of those chiefs, and they were in fact the sole representatives of that republic whose name still continued to be vainly invoked. The first period is that of the reign of the Julian family, from the year 30 before Christ, to the year 68 after his nativity. The second is marked by the reign of the Flavian family, which, by its own influence, and afterwards by adoption, kept possession of the throne from the year 69 to 192. The third is that of the soldiers of fortune, who alternately wrested the sceptre from each other's hands, from the year 192 to the year 284. The fourth is that of the colleagues who divided the sovereignty, without dissolving the unity of the empire, from the year 284 to the year 323.

The Julian family is that of the dictator Cæsar; his name was transmitted, by adoption, out of the direct line, but always within the circle of his kindred, to the five first heads of the Roman empire; Augustus reigned from the year 30 B.C. to the year 14 of our era; Tiberius, from 14 to 37 A.D.; Caligula, from 37 to 41; Claudius, from 41 to 54; Nero, from 54 to 68. Their names alone, with the exception of the first, concerning whom there still exists some diversity of opinion, recall every thing that is shameful and perfidious in man,—every thing that is atrocious in the abuse of absolute power. Never had the world been astounded by such a variety and enormity of crime; never had so fatal an attack been made on every virtue, every principle, which men had been accustomed to hold in reverence. Outraged nature seemed to deny to these men the power of perpetuating their race: not one of them left children; nevertheless, the order of succession among them was legitimate, according to the meaning now given to that word. The first head of that house had been invested with supreme power by the sole depositaries of the national authority, the senate and the people of Rome;



after him the transmission of the sovereignty was always regular, conformable to the laws of inheritance, recognised by all the several bodies of the state, and was not disputed by any pretender to the crown. The adoptive son, occupying in every respect the place of the natural son, was admitted, without hesitation or opposition, to the place of his father.

During this period of ninety-eight years, the limits of the Roman empire remained nearly unchanged, with the sole exception of the conquest of Great Britain in the reign of Claudius. Military glory had overthrown the republic and raised up the dictatorship; the attachment of the soldiery to the memory of the hero who had led them on to battle, had founded the sovereignty of his family; but Augustus and Tiberius, heirs of the greatest military power which the world had ever known, distrusted, while they caressed, this instrument of their supremacy: they owed all their power to the army; they feared only the more to owe their ruin to it. They wanted the selfish, and not the generous, passions of the army. They dreaded the virtuous enthusiasm which is easily excited among large bodies of men; they took care to economise both the heroism and the victories of their legions; nor would they give them leaders whose example or whose approbation they might prefer to the largesses of their emperors. Augustus and Tiberius would not attempt what the Republic would have accomplished,—what Charlemagne effected with far inferior means,—the conquest and civilisation of Germany. They thought they had done enough when they had protected their territory with a strong military frontier, against neighbours who regarded war as a virtue: they bequeathed to their successors all the dangers of attack and invasion.

At this epoch the military force of the Roman empire consisted of thirty legions. The complement of each, including its auxiliaries, levied from among the allies of Rome, was 12,500 men, among whom were reckoned 6000 men of that admirable infantry of the line, so

heavily armed, yet so easily disposable, which had achieved the conquest of the world: a corps of Roman cavalry, 726 strong, was attached to it; the rest was composed of auxiliary troops, and wore the arms of the several countries which furnished them. In time of peace, the legions did not inhabit towns or fortresses: they occupied intrenched camps on the principal frontiers, where no civil occupation was ever suffered to interfere with the great profession of arms; where the exercises imposed on the legionary soldier, to fortify his body and keep him in full activity and vigour, had always war for their object; and where the severity of discipline was never relaxed. Three of these legions were stationed in Britain, south of the Caledonian wall; five in Rhenish Gaul; eleven on the Danube, from its source in Rhætia down to its mouth in the Black Sea; six in Syria, and two in Cappadocia, for the defence of the Persian frontier. The pacific provinces of Egypt, Africa, and Spain, had each but one legion. Italy and the city of Rome, on the tranquillity of which the safety of the emperor depended, were kept in awe by a body of 20,000 soldiers, distinguished from the rest of the army by higher pay, by the emperor's peculiar favour, and by immunity for every licence. They were called the Prætorian Guard; they were encamped without the gates of Rome, and never quitted the prætorium or the residence of the emperor. The aggregate of the legions formed an army of 375,000 men. Including the prætorians, the entire military establishment of the empire, at its greatest power, never exceeded 400,000 men.

The domination of the Julian family was disastrous to Rome, to the senators, to all men distinguished for opulence, for moral elevation, for ambition, or for attachment to the memory and the fame of their forefathers; disastrous to all the antique virtues of Rome, to all noble sentiments and aspirations, which it crushed and stifled for ever. But the provinces, rarely visited by the emperors, never invaded by the barbarians, enjoyed all the advantages of peace, of an immense com-

merce, of easy and safe communication, of laws generally equal and just. In times of which the memory is almost exclusively odious and shameful for the capital, the population of the recently acquired provinces—of Gaul and Spain, for instance, which had been almost devastated or reduced to slavery at the time of their conquest—rapidly recovered and increased in strength and numbers. It was at this and the subsequent period that most of those stately cities which adorned the provinces were built or enlarged; that the arts of Rome and of Greece were borne by commerce to the ends of the empire, and that the monuments which still excite our wonder, which throw a lustre over spots unconsecrated by any glorious recollections, bridges, aqueducts, circuses, theatres, were undertaken or constructed. The subjects of Rome sought to drown all thought of the future; to forget crimes which did not reach themselves; to sever themselves from a country of whose chiefs they could not think without blushing; to deter their children from entering on any public career, where they would be beset by dangers, and to enjoy the advantages offered them by arts, opulence and leisure.

Republican sentiments were still cherished by all the men who possessed the public confidence and esteem. We find them in all their pristine energy in the poet Lucan, in the historian Tacitus, in the jurisconsult Antistius Labeo. The name of republic, which had been preserved; the laws and customs of ancient Rome, many of which still subsisted, rendered it impossible to speak of the past otherwise than with reverence. Nevertheless, for a century, during which four execrable men filled the throne, one of whom was an idiot, and two madmen, not one important battle was fought for the recovery of freedom,—no revolt—no civil war. The reason for this is, that the love of liberty was confined to the higher aristocracy. The senators knew how to die with sufficient courage to save themselves from infamy; but they could make no resistance. The people of Rome, almost entirely fed by the largesses of the emperors, con-

tinually amused and intoxicated by shows and games, looked on the successive fall of the heads of the illustrious men they had feared or envied, as another variety of exhibition : the people of the provinces, strangers to the antique liberty, perceived no difference between the republic and the empire ; the army, confounding fidelity to a standard with the duty of citizens, and blind obedience with patriotism, attached themselves to the Julian family with implicit and unhesitating devotion. The excesses of the fury and frenzy of Nero at length brought about its fall ; but its power was, even then, so firmly established, that it was the attachment of the soldiery to the extinct race of the Julii which enkindled the first civil war : they would neither have the republic, nor the emperor chosen by the senate. As no law nor usage existed determining the succession to the sovereignty, the supreme power was necessarily the prey of the strongest or the most dextrous. Each army wished to invest its own chief with the purple. Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and other less fortunate pretenders, struggled for supremacy ; but the habits of subordination were still so strong, that, after this storm, which endured scarcely eighteen months, every thing returned into its wonted order ; and the senate, the provinces, the armies, obeyed the conqueror Vespasian, as they would have obeyed one of Julian blood.

We have designated the second period of the empire by the name of the Flavian family—the family of Vespasian. The nine emperors who were successively invested with the purple, in the space of the 123 years from his accession, were not all, however, of Flavian race, even by the rites of adoption, which in Rome was become a second nature ; but the respect of the world for the virtues of Flavius Vespasian induced them all to assume his name, and most of them showed themselves worthy of such an affiliation.

Vespasian had been invested with the purple at Alexandria, on the 1st of July, A. D. 69 : he died in 79. His two sons reigned in succession after him ; Titus,

from 79 to 81 ; Domitian, from 81 to 96. The latter having been assassinated, Nerva, then an old man, was raised to the throne by the senate (A. D. 96—98). He adopted Trajan (98—117) ; who adopted Adrian (117—138). Adrian adopted Antoninus Pius (138—161) ; who adopted Marcus Aurelius (161—180) ; and Commodus succeeded his father, Marcus Aurelius (180—192). No period in history presents such a succession of good and great men upon any throne : two monsters, Domitian and Commodus, interrupt and terminate it ; the virtues of their fathers could not save them from the corrupting effect of an education received at the foot of a throne. It is worthy of note, that the natural succession gave but one single virtuous man to the empire of the world ;—Titus, surnamed the delight of mankind ; whose short reign, however, hardly afforded a sufficient trial of his character. All the others were called to the throne by a glorious election, sanctioned by the rites of adoption, by which the prince consulted the public voice, and voluntarily transmitted his sceptre to the most worthy.

History throws little light on this period. Abroad, the enterprises of the Romans were confined to some wars against the Parthians, which produced no permanent change in the frontiers of the two empires ; to the wars of Trajan beyond the Danube (A. D. 102—107), in which he conquered Dacia, now Wallachia and Transylvania ; and to the wars of Marcus Aurelius against the Quadi and the Marcomanni, who had succeeded in forming a confederation of the whole of Germany, for the purpose of attacking the Roman empire.

The pillars of Trajan and of Antonine, which are still standing and covered with bas-reliefs, are monuments of these two glorious expeditions. At home, the attention of historians was exclusively directed to the imperial palace ; and they had only to commemorate the virtues of the sovereign, and the happiness of the subjects. This happiness, the result of universal peace, of equal protection, equal security for all, was, doubt-

less, great, and has been often celebrated. One symptom of it was a fresh dawn of literature; feeble, indeed, compared with that of the age which has lent its glory to the name of Augustus, though it derived all its splendour from men formed during the latter years of the republic. The reign of Adrian was peculiarly marked by the flourishing state of art; those of the Antonines, by great ardour in the cultivation of philosophy. Yet in these 123 years, history records few acts of public virtue, few noble or distinguished characters.

This was the period at which, more especially, the provincial cities attained the highest pitch of opulence, and were adorned with the most remarkable edifices. Adrian had a strong taste for the arts, and for all the enjoyments of life; he was continually travelling through the provinces of his vast empire; he excited emulation among the several large cities and the wealthier citizens; and he carried to the farthest extremities of the Roman dominions that luxury and taste for decoration which, before his time, was the exclusive distinction of those magnificent cities which seemed the depositories of the civilisation of the world.

But it was during this same period that peace and prosperity fostered the colossal growth of a few fortunes; of those *latifundia*, or vast domains, which, according to Pliny the elder, were the destruction of Italy and of the empire. A single proprietor gradually became possessed of provinces which had furnished the republic with the occasion of decreeing more than one triumph to its generals. While he amassed wealth so disproportionate to the wants of a single man, he cleared all the country he got within his grasp, of that numerous and respectable class of independent cultivators, hitherto so happy in their mediocrity. Where thousands of free citizens had formerly been found ready to defend the soil they tilled with their own hands, nothing was to be seen but slaves. Even this miserable population rapidly diminished, because its labour was too expensive; and the proprietor found it answer better to turn his land

into pasture. The fertile fields of Italy ceased to supply food for their inhabitants ; the provisioning of Rome depended on fleets, which brought corn from Sicily, from Egypt, and from Africa : from the capital to the uttermost provinces, depopulation followed in the train of overgrown wealth ; and it was in the midst of this universal prosperity, before a single barbarian had crossed the frontiers of the empire, that the difficulty of recruiting the legions began to be felt. In the war against the Quadi and the Marcomanni, which was preceded by so long a peace, Marcus Aurelius was reduced to the necessity of enrolling the slaves and the robbers of Rome. The frontier provinces, those most exposed to the attacks of the barbarians, those which suffered the most from the presence and the military vexations of the legions, did not suffer so much from the rapid decline of population, and of the warlike virtues, as the more wealthy provinces of the interior. The levies of troops were no longer made in Rome ; they were raised almost exclusively in northern Gaul, and along the right bank of the Danube. This long Illyrian frontier, in particular, for more than two centuries preserved the reputation of furnishing more soldiers to the empire than all the rest of the provinces combined. This border country had offered little temptation to the cupidity of Roman senators : they cared not to have their property in a province constantly harassed by the enemy. The land which the senators would not buy, remained in the possession of its old proprietors ; there, consequently, a population, numerous, free, robust, and hardy, still maintained itself. It long furnished the army with soldiers ; it soon supplied it with chiefs.

History, which, during the whole of this period, rarely fixes our attention on any individual, has, however, celebrated the virtues, and still more the munificence, of a subject of the Antonines, Herodes Atticus, consul in the year 143. He lived almost constantly at Athens, in philosophical retirement. Several of the monuments with which he adorned the cities situated



in the midst of his immense domains, are still standing ; they give us some idea, not only of the liberality, but of the wealth of a Roman of that period : and every province contained some citizen who resembled Herod in magnificence. Adrian appointed him prefect of the free cities of Asia. He obtained from that emperor a grant of 3,000,000 drachmæ (100,000*l.*) for the construction of an aqueduct at the city of Troy ; but, to render it more magnificent, he doubled the sum from his own private fortune. At Athens, where he presided over the public games, he built a stadium of white marble, 600 feet in length, and of sufficient size to contain the whole body of the people. Shortly afterwards, having lost his wife Regilla, he consecrated to her memory a theatre which was unmatched through the whole extent of the empire. The only timber used was cedar, which was exquisitely carved. The Odeon, built in the time of Pericles, had fallen into ruin : Herodes Atticus rebuilt it, at his own cost, in all its ancient splendour. Greece was likewise indebted to him for the restoration of the temple of Neptune, in the isthmus of Corinth ; for the construction of a theatre at Corinth ; for a stadium at Delphi ; a bath at Thermopylæ ; and Italy for an aqueduct at Canusium. Many other cities of Epirus, Thessalia, Eubœa, Bœotia, and Peloponnesus, were likewise adorned through his liberality. We cannot refuse the tribute of praise due to this illustrious citizen, but we must pity the country where such fortunes can be accumulated ; where one man of enormous wealth, and thousands of dependent slaves, must have taken the place of millions of men, free, happy, and virtuous.

The tyranny of Commodus, the last of the Flavii, his vices and his abominations, were punished by the domestic assassination which delivered the world of a monster. But with his death (December 31. 192) commenced the third and most calamitous period ; that which we have characterised as the period of upstarts—soldiers of fortune, who usurped the imperial power.



It lasted ninety-two years, A. D. 192—284. During that time thirty-two emperors, and twenty-seven pretenders to the empire, alternately hurled each other from the throne by incessant civil warfare. It was during this period that we find the prætorians putting the sovereignty of the world to auction ; the legions of the East and of the West disputing the fatal honour of decorating with the purple the chiefs who soon perished by assassination ; men taken from the lowest ranks of society, without genius, without education, raised by the brutal caprice of their comrades above all that the world had been accustomed to hold in reverence. Such was the Moor Macrinus, who, in 217, succeeded to Caracalla, whom he had caused to be assassinated. Such was the Goth Maximin, distinguished only by his gigantic stature, his ignorance, his strength, and his brutality ; who was, in like manner, the assassin and the successor of Alexander Severus. (A. D. 255.) Such was the Arab Philip, a robber by education and profession, and raised to the throne by the murder of Gordian.

When an absolute monarch is hurled from the throne in consequence of his tyranny, and dies without natural heirs, there exists neither law nor public opinion according to which the transmission of power may be regulated : there is no authority generally recognised as legitimate. Force alone decides ; and what force has raised, force is just as likely to overthrow. Despotism, therefore, gives a character of greater distrust and greater cruelty to civil war, and to those who direct it ; since it eradicates every feeling of duty which might serve as a protection to themselves or to their adversaries. Ninety-two years of nearly incessant civil war taught the world on what a frail and unstable foundation the virtue of the Antonines had reared the felicity of the empire. The people took no share whatever in these intestine wars ; the sovereignty had passed into the hands of the legions, and they disposed of it at their pleasure ; while the cities, indifferent

to the claims of the pretenders, having neither garrisons, fortifications, nor armed population, awaited the decision of the legions without a thought of resistance. Yet their helpless and despicable neutrality did not save them from the ferocity or the rapacity of the combatants, who wanted other enemies than soldiers, richer plunder than that of a camp ; and the slightest mark of favour shown by a city to one pretender to the empire, was avenged by his successful competitor by military executions, and often by the sale of the whole body of the citizens as slaves.

The very soldiers were sometimes weary of their own tyranny. They had not a single Roman sentiment ; no memory of liberty or of the republic ; no reverence for the senate or for the laws. Their sole notion of legitimate government was the inheritance of power ; but, during this disastrous period, every attempt to return to the principle of hereditary succession was calamitous. To that, the empire owed the ferocity of Caracalla, son of Septimius Severus (A.D. 211—217) ; the pollution of Heliogabalus, his nephew (A.D. 218—222) ; and the incapacity of Gallienus, son of Valerius (A.D. 253—268). The name of Gallienus is associated with the shameful period in which Rome, heretofore the terror of the barbarians, began to tremble before them. The legions, enfeebled, and reduced to less than 6000 men, had been withdrawn from the frontiers, and opposed to each other in continually renewed conflicts. Their discipline was utterly destroyed ; their leaders neither merited nor obtained their confidence. After a defeat, it was found impossible to recruit the army ; at the moment of an attack it was with the greatest difficulty they could be induced to march. The barbarians, witnesses of this anarchy and of these conflicts, no longer beholding on their frontiers those formidable camps of legions which had so long held them in awe, as if by common consent, made incursions at all points at once, from the extremities of Caledonia to those of Persia.

The Franks, a new confederation of Germanic tribes,

who had established themselves near the mouths of the Rhine, ravaged the whole of Gaul, Spain, and a part of Africa, from the year 253 to 268. The Allemanni, another new confederation, established on the Upper Rhine, traversed Rhætia, and advanced as far as Ravenna, pillaging Italy in their course. The Goths, after driving the Romans out of Dacia, pillaged Mœsia, massacred 100,000 of the inhabitants of Philippopolis in Thrace; then, spreading along the coasts of the Euxine, ventured upon this unknown sea in vessels they had taken from maritime towns, plundered the cities of Colchis and Asia Minor, and at length penetrated, by the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, into Greece, which they laid waste from one extremity to the other. At the same time, the Persians of the new dynasty of the Sassanides menaced the East. Sapor (or, according to Persian pronunciation, Shah Poor) had conquered Armenia. The emperor Valerian, father and colleague of Gallienus, marched to meet him in Mesopotamia. He was defeated and made prisoner in the year 260. The Persian monarch then ravaged Syria, Cilicia, and Cappadocia; and his progress was only arrested on the confines of Arabia, by Odenatus, the wealthy senator of Palmyra, and his wife, the celebrated Zenobia.

This first universal discomfiture of the Roman arms, coming after such unrivalled power and success, gave a blow to the empire from which it never recovered. In all their invasions, the barbarians preserved the recollection of the long terrors and the long resentment with which the Romans had inspired them. Their hatred was still too fresh and fervent to allow them to show any pity to their vanquished foes. Till then they had seen nothing of the Romans but their soldiers; but when they suddenly penetrated into the midst of these magnificent and populous cities, at first they feared that they should be crushed by a multitude so superior to their own; but, when they saw and understood the cowardice of these enervated masses, their fear was changed into the deepest scorn. Their cruelty was

in proportion to these two sentiments, and their object was rather destruction than conquest. The population, which had been thinned by the operation of wealth and luxury, was now further reduced by that of poverty. The human species seemed to vanish before the sword of the barbarians. Sometimes they massacred all the inhabitants of a town: sometimes they sent them into slavery, far from the country of their birth. After such calamities, fresh fears, fresh oppression, fresh miseries, effectually checked the growth of the population. Vast deserts formed themselves in the heart of the empire, and the wisest and most virtuous of the emperors endeavoured to entice new colonies to settle there.

The military elections, however, which had brought the empire into so perilous a condition, at length furnished it with defenders. The formidable armed democracy which had consulted only its cupidity or its caprice, in investing its unworthy favourites with the purple, so long as its sole object was to share the spoil of the state; when its own safety was threatened, its own existence compromised, together with that of the empire, had at least a distinct perception of the sort of merit which might avail to save it. Without great military talents it was impossible to gain the esteem of the Roman army, even in its decline. When the soldiers wanted great men, they knew where to find them; and, to keep the barbarians in check, they at length made elections which did them honour.

It was the soldiery that elected Claudius (A. D. 268—270), who obtained so great a victory over the Goths, and for a time saved the empire; Aurelian (A. D. 270—275), who re-established the unity of power, and crushed all rival pretensions to the throne, which had divided the army and the provinces; who subjugated the East, and led captive that Zenobia who had carried Greek civilisation to Palmyra, and had accustomed Arabs to triumph over Romans and Persians. It was the soldiery that chose Tacitus, whose virtues were manifest even in a reign of six months (A. D. 275);

Probus (A. D. 276—282), who defeated nearly all the German tribes in succession, and drove them out of Gaul and the provinces of the Danube. Lastly, it was the soldiery who gave the crown to Diocletian, who put an end to this long period of anarchy. This succession of great captains sufficiently proved that valour was not extinct; that military talents were still at command; and that the soldiers, when they really wished to save the state, were no bad judges of the qualities demanded by the public weal.

But such a succession of invasions and civil wars, so much suffering, disorder, and crime, had brought the empire into a state of mortal languor, from which it never revived. The necessities of the state had increased with its dangers. The impoverished provinces were compelled to double the taxes which had been too heavy for them even in their greatest prosperity; survivors were obliged to pay for the dead. The distress and despair which urged the peasantry to abandon their land and seek refuge in flight, constantly increased, and the deserts spread with frightful rapidity. The wise and victorious Probus was reduced to the necessity of repeopling his provinces with the enemies he had subdued, and of recruiting his legions with captives. He transported a colony of Vandals into England; he planted Gepidæ on the banks of the Rhine; Franks on those of the Danube; other Franks in Asia Minor, and Bastarnæ in Thrace: but, though he took care to place each barbarous nation at an immense distance from its home, with very few exceptions they soon disdained the enjoyments of civilised life which were offered them, and the lands which were allotted to them; they revolted, plundered the unarmed natives of the province, crossed the empire in every direction, and at length regained their natal soil. The most daring of these rebellions was that of the Franks settled on the Euxine. They seized some vessels in a port of the Black Sea, descended the Hellespont, pillaged Greece and Sicily, sailed through the Straits of Cadiz, and, after laying

waste the coast of Spain and Gaul, landed in Friesland amid their kindred tribes.

Probus had likewise required from the Germans an annual levy of 6000 recruits, whom he incorporated into the different legions. It was his endeavour, as he said, that the Roman should feel the aid of the barbarian, but should not see it. But a disgraceful succour cannot long be concealed. The Roman saw that the barbarian was capable of occupying his place in the camp, and gladly threw aside his buckler. By a scandalous decree, Gallienus had forbidden the senators to serve in the army; nor did one of them, either during his reign or that of his successors, ever protest against this degrading exclusion, though it deprived them of all share in the administration of public affairs, and of all chance of ascending the throne. From that time the highest class of society ceased to be respected by others, or by itself. It sought only to lose all thought of the evils which beset the state, in vice and dissipation; luxury and effeminacy increased with the public calamities; and those whom fate threatened with the most intense sufferings, sought no better preparation for them than in the most shameful pleasures.

We have, at length, come to the fourth period, the last of those into which we divided the history of the empire—that of the colleagues who shared the sovereignty from the year 284 to the year 328. It is shorter than those which preceded it, and we shall, therefore, pass over it more briefly; the rather, that a part of this period will require our attention hereafter.

Diocletian, who was proclaimed emperor by the army of Persia, on the 17th of September, 284, was an Illyrian soldier, whose parents were slaves, and who had probably been a slave himself in his youth. This man, whose own strength had enabled him to ascend from the most abject to the highest station in society, proved to the world that he was still more distinguished for the vigour of his genius, the prudence of his counsels, his empire over his own passions and over the minds of

others, than by his personal bravery. He felt that the empire, decrepid and tottering on its ancient base, required a new form, a new constitution. Neither his servile birth, his education, nor the examples he saw around him, were of a kind to inspire him with much esteem for men. He expected little from them. He did not even appear to understand that liberty which had once inspired the Romans with such heroic valour. All the recollections of the republic were degraded and defaced, nor did he attempt to turn them to any advantage : he saw nothing but the danger of the invasion of barbarians ; he thought of nothing but the means of resistance ; and he organised a military government, strong, prompt, and energetic. But he reflected that the head of such a government was placed by his very isolation, by the immense distance that severed him from all other men, in a situation of peculiar peril ; and that community of interest, combination for mutual defence, was the basis of all security. He, therefore, associated with himself colleagues in whom he hoped to find defenders in time of danger, and avengers if he fell. Thus he founded a despotism on that balance of power which is the essence of free government.

To this end he traced that division of the empire, which we have already described, into the four great prefectures of Gaul, Illyricum, Italy, and the East. He entrusted the administration of the two most peaceful, rich, and civilised, Italy and the East, to two Augusti, while two Cæsars were called to defend Gaul and Illyricum. He offered the two Cæsars, as a definite and legitimate object of ambition, the succession of the two Augusti, to whom they were bound by rites of adoption. All the armies being thus attached to his system, and commanded by his colleagues, he had no longer to dread revolt. He gave them a new organisation and new names ; he strengthened their discipline, while he made some concessions to the degeneracy of the age, by lightening their armour and increasing the proportion of the cavalry and light infantry to the infantry of the line.



With these new armies he drove the barbarians beyond the frontiers at all points, and once more rendered the empire formidable. Diocletian reserved to himself the government of the East. He established his court, not at Antioch, though that was the capital of the prefecture, but at Nicomedia on the Propontis, nearly opposite the spot on which Constantinople was afterwards built. He affected an oriental splendour, which was neither in keeping with his soldier-like habits, nor with the vigour of his mind and character. He gave Italy to Augustus Maximian, an Illyrian peasant like himself, and his old companion in arms, whom he commissioned to humble the senate and city of Rome. Cæsar Galerius was charged with the government of Illyricum, and Cæsar Constantius Chlorus with that of Gaul. Despotism, which trains men to regard all resistance as a crime, or as a dangerous revolt, renders them cruel and sanguinary. The soldier-like education of Diocletian and his colleagues, the rank whence they had been elevated, the habit of seeing blood flow, increased this ferocity. The government of the colleagues was stained with numerous executions; but the character of these acts of violence was not the same as that of the atrocities of the earlier Cæsars. In Tiberius and his successors, we find that cruelty which is almost invariably united with cowardice and effeminacy; in Diocletian and his colleagues, that ferocity which the lower orders of the people often display in their abuse of power. Maximian and Galerius had preserved all the habits of brutal and illiterate peasants. Severus and Maximin, who were afterwards joined to them in power, were from the same class. Constantius Chlorus alone belonged to a more distinguished family, and in him we find proofs of more humane sentiments.

It was much more the indignation which all resistance, all independence of mind, excite in tyrants, than any superstitious prejudice, that induced Diocletian and his colleagues to set on foot a violent persecution of the Christians. The new religion had spread in silence,



and had made considerable progress throughout the Roman empire; though it had hardly excited the attention of the government, or that of the Roman historians, who, during the three first centuries, seem hardly to have remarked its existence. It had had no share in the revolutions, no public or political influence; the philosophers had not thought it worth their while to engage in controversies with obscure sectaries. The priests of the ancient gods were doubtless indignant at seeing their altars neglected by a set of men who were daily becoming more numerous; but these priests did not form a body in the state. Those of each divinity thought they had separate interests; they had little influence, and small means of injuring. The first persecutions, therefore, as they are called, were little more than random acts of violence, extending to few victims, and over a short space of time. But when brutal soldiers, impatient of all opposition, had been invested with the purple, and when order had been sufficiently re-established throughout the empire for them to perceive all that transgressed the limits of despotism, they were indignant at the existence of a new religion, as a violation of uniformity of obedience. They looked upon it much more as a breach of discipline, than of piety; and they persecuted the Christians, not as enemies to their gods, but as rebels to their own authority. The more absolute they were, the more exasperated were they at that new power of the soul which rendered it insensible to pain, triumphant in torture; which calmly and unresistingly rose above the reach of their power. The struggle between the fury of despotism and the heroism of conviction, between executioners and martyrs, is worthy of eternal remembrance. It endured, with little interruption, up to the end of the fourth period, or the union of the whole empire under Constantine.

Diocletian, as if to secure the perpetuity of the system of government of which he was the author, determined to become, as it were, witness of his own succession. In his four-headed despotism he had

reckoned on what he had found in himself — the ascendancy of superior genius over ordinary men. So long as he retained the purple, he was the real, the only head of the government. When he resolved to retire from the world, and to call the two Cæsars, Galerius and Constantius Chlorus, to the places of the Augusti, he had sufficient influence over his colleague, Maximian (though by no means disgusted with power) to induce him to lay aside the purple at Milan, on the 1st of May, 305, at the same time that he himself resigned it at Nicomedia. With a strength of mind which absolute sway had not enfeebled, he confined himself for nine years within the narrow enclosure of private life, without evincing a regret ; and found in the care of his garden at Salona, a serenity and content which he had never known as emperor. But, from the time of his retirement, the division of the sovereign power brought about its ruin. During the republic, the consuls had shared the command of the armies without jealousy, because both were subject to a superior power — that of the senate and the people. In like manner, the colleagues of Diocletian had always felt that in him alone resided the whole majesty of ancient Rome ; but as soon as they recognised nothing above themselves, they thought only of their personal greatness ; and the remainder of the fourth period, as we shall contemplate it during the reign of Constantine, was a scene of perpetual tumult and intestine warfare.

## CHAP. III.

BARBARIANS ANTERIOR TO THE FOURTH CENTURY. — REVIEW OF THE BARBAROUS NATIONS BORDERING ON THE ROMAN TERRITORY. — 1. BARBARIANS OF AFRICA ; BEREBERI, GÆTULI, MOORS. — 2. OF ASIA ; ARABS. — SPLENDOUR OF PALMYRA. — ZENOBIÆ. — PARTHIAN EMPIRE. — REVOLT OF THE PERSIANS. — THEIR IMPERFECT CIVILISATION. — ARMENIANS. — SCYTHIANS, OR TARTARS. — THEIR UNALTERED CHARACTER. — WARLIKE HABITS OF NOMADIC TRIBES. — OVERTHROW OF THE EMPIRE OF THE HUNS BY THE SIENPI, CAUSE OF THEIR MIGRATION WESTWARD. — ALANS. — TAIFALÆ. — 3. BARBAROUS NATIONS OF EUROPE. — THREE GREAT TRIBES, CELTS, SLAVONIANS, GERMANS. — EXTENT OF TERRITORY, HABITS, AND RELIGION OF THE CELTS. — SLAVONIC TRIBES. — GERMANIC TRIBES. — INFLUENCE OF THEIR MANNERS AND INSTITUTIONS ON MODERN EUROPE. — THEIR SUPERIORITY TO THE OTHER RACES. — CHARACTER AND HABITS. — ATTACHMENT TO FREEDOM. — POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS. — KINGS. — POPULAR ASSEMBLIES. — REVERENCE FOR WOMEN. — RELIGION.

WE have endeavoured, as far as was consistent with the narrow limits prescribed to us, to place before our readers the condition and progress of that part of the human species over which civilisation had been diffused by the Greek and Roman arms. This vast population was subject to laws still in force in our own tribunals ; it had begun to acknowledge the religion we still profess ; it studied, and strove to imitate, the same masterpieces of literature and art which are still the objects of our highest admiration ; in the culture of the mental faculties it pursued a system from which we have not widely deviated. Even the manners of the large cities of the Roman empire had considerable resemblance to our own.

We must now transfer our attention to another important portion of mankind ; — to that which was included under the common denomination of barbarian ; and which, at a period whose events we are about to

trace, utterly overthrew that government which the civilised world had so long obeyed. From the time of this great revolution, a new race of men took possession of the regions we now inhabit, bringing with them other laws, other religious opinions, other manners, other notions of the perfection of man, and, by consequence, of the ends to be sought in education. The intermixture of the two races was not accomplished till after long sufferings, nor without the destruction of a great part of that progress towards improvement which mankind had made during a course of ages. It was, however, this intermixture which made us what we are : we are heirs of the double inheritance of the Romans and the barbarians ; we have engrafted the laws, institutions, manners, and opinions of the one race on those of the other. If we would know ourselves, we must go back to the study of our progenitors ; of those who transmitted to us their culture, no less than of those who sought to destroy it.

It is not our object to pass in review the various tribes of the whole civilised world ; we shall confine our attention to those who came into collision with the Roman world ; who were preparing to appear as actors in the terrible drama we are about to behold. We shall have very few names of illustrious individuals, very few dates, with which to encumber the memory of our readers. The state of savage man must be studied as part of the natural history of the species ; but it is subject to few diversities, or those diversities are of a kind easily to elude our observation. History begins with civilisation. So long as man has to struggle with physical wants, he concentrates his whole attention on the present ; for him there is no past, no memory of events, no history. Not only the migrations of tribes, the virtues, the errors, or the crimes of their leaders, are not handed down from age to age ; their internal policy, their manners, even at the moment of their coming in contact with civilised nations, are very imperfectly, often very unfaithfully, represented. The

barbarians did not describe themselves ; they have left no record of their own sentiments, or of their own thoughts ; and those who have described them saw them through the medium of their prejudices. In order to introduce some arrangement into our remarks on the barbarous nations which contributed to the overthrow of the Roman empire, we shall follow the frontier line of that empire ; setting out from the southern point, and proceeding eastward and along the north. We shall thus pass in review the border nations of Africa, Asia, and Europe. We shall begin with the nations which exercised the least influence over the destinies of Rome, and end with the most important. Following this order, we find the Gætuli, the Moors, the Arabs, the Persians, the Armenians, the nomadic or shepherd tribes of Tartary, and the three main stems or races of ancient Europe, the Celtic or Keltic, the Slavonic, and the Teutonic or Germanic.

The most obscure and feeble among the neighbours of the empire were the tribes inhabiting Africa south of the Roman provinces ; on this frontier, as well as on all the others, the Romans had begun by imposing a tribute on the border countries, in order to keep their kings in a state of dependence : then, after accustoming them for some time to obedience, they incorporated the whole people with the empire. Caligula reduced Mauritania to the condition of a Roman province ; and, under the reign of the emperor Claudius, the Romans founded colonies up to the verge of the great desert. One of the most southerly of their cities, Salée, situated in the present kingdom of Morocco, was exposed to frequent incursions of wild elephants : wild beasts were, indeed, almost the only enemies they had to fear on this frontier ; for the Roman power extended nearly as far as the habitable country : generals, and men of consular dignity, had penetrated into all the gorges of Mount Atlas. The wandering troops of Berbers, of Gætuli, or of Moors, alone traversed the deserts, as merchants or as robbers. Some cultivated the oases,

which, watered by some perennial spring, rose like verdant islands in the midst of the sands; others, with their camels laden with ivory, and often with slaves, crossed the Zahara, and established a communication between Nigritia and the Roman province. Without fixed dwelling-places, without regular government, they remained free because they were wanderers. The Romans had not conquered them because they could not conquer nature. They asked of them only the ivory and the citrons with which their caravans were laden; the murex which the Gætuli gathered on their rocks; the lions, tigers, and all the monsters of Libya, which were taken at great cost to Rome and the other great cities of the empire, for the savage combats of the amphitheatre. A very active trade penetrated much farther into central Africa than that of the Europeans of the present day. Pliny expresses his wonder that, although so many merchants continually traversed these regions, so many Roman magistrates had penetrated as far as Mount Atlas or the desert, he had found it difficult to collect any thing relating to the country but fables.

But the Africans did not always remain at so respectful a distance, nor in so pacific an attitude. In proportion as the oppression of magistrates, the weight of taxation, and the disasters of the empire, thinned the population of the Roman province, the Moors and the Gætuli poured down from Mount Atlas, or issued forth from the desert, and drove their flocks and herds to feed in the neglected fields. Constantly armed, but still timorous; regarding property as an usurpation, and civilisation as a foe; professing no religion but vengeance, and denying the right of their enemies to exercise over them a judicial restraint which they would not tolerate from their own chiefs, they plundered the more remote and unprotected lands, and, when they found resistance, fled. They regarded the punishment of their robberies as a wrong and an insult to their nation; and waited in silence the opportunity of taking ruthless revenge. Their depredations gradually became more formidable,

and drove the Romans nearer and nearer to the coast. At the commencement of the fourth century, Mauritanian princes had begun to form anew small tributary states between Carthage and the desert, and civilisation had almost disappeared at the foot of Mount Atlas while the people still remained in a state of subjection.

Egypt was likewise girt round by savage tribes, who had sought the freedom of the wilderness within the boundaries of the Roman territory. The Nasamonian Moors approached the western bank of the Nile, the Arabs the eastern ; and the two races were hard to distinguish. Abyssinia and Nubia, which, two centuries later, were converted to Christianity by the Egyptians, had, at the time we are treating of, little communication with the Romans. Egypt was by much the most southerly of the Roman possessions: one of its largest cities, Syene, was situated under the tropic of Cancer. The prodigious monuments of its early civilisation, on the origin of which history affords us no light, are found mingled with remains of Roman art. For the first time, the works of the masters of the world appeared petty and contemptible by the side of temples whose construction passes our comprehension. Lower Egypt had adopted the language and manners of Greece ; Upper Egypt preserved the use of the ancient Egyptian tongue—the Coptic ; and the deserts of Thebais already concealed in their inhospitable wastes a new and strange nation — a nation barbarous in aspect and in manners ; from which women and the joys of domestic life were banished ; perpetuated only by the misanthropy or the fanaticism of its neighbours. St. Anthony, an illiterate peasant of the Thebais, had retired into the desert, to a distance of three days' journey from the habitable country. He chose a spot where a living spring supplied him with drink, and depended on the charity of his neighbours for food : he lived more than a century (from A. D. 251, to A. D. 356). Before his death, 5000 monks, following his example, had retired into the deserts of Nitria. They took vows of poverty, solitude



prayer, dirt, and ignorance ; they entered with passion into theological disputes ; and their irruptions, in which they enforced their dogmas with clubs and stones, much more than with arguments, disturbed the tranquillity of the capital of Egypt before it was exposed to the attacks of the barbarians.

The great peninsula of Arabia, lying between Egypt and Persia, was imperfectly known to the Romans : this region, four times as extensive as France, was not formed by nature to sustain a numerous population, nor to admit of a state of civilisation resembling our own. The Romans kept up some communication through it with India, but left to the Arabs the toil and peril of conducting caravans through the desert. They saw with amazement a nation permanently combining trade with pillage ; they already designated by the name of *Saracens* those daring robbers who issued from the desert and infested the plains of Syria, forming a cavalry unmatched in the world, especially for the indomitable ardour and the docility of their horses. But they did not guess the qualities which lay dormant in the Arab character ; qualities which we shall see in full strength and activity three centuries later, when this nation girded itself up for the conquest of the world.

It was in the midst of these deserts, 500 miles from Seleucia, on the Tigris, one of the largest cities of Persia, 200 miles from the frontiers of Syria, that the city of Palmyra arose, as if by enchantment, in a fertile country, watered by plenteous springs, and thickly studded with waving palms. Immense plains of sand surrounded it on all sides, serving as a barrier against the Parthians and the Romans, and pervious only to the caravans of the Arabs, who exchanged the treasures of the East and of the West between these two nations, and reposed after their toilsome march in this sumptuous city.

Palmyra, peopled by a colony of Greeks and of Arabs, united the manners of both. Its government was republican, and it maintained its independence



during the time of the greatest power of Rome. The Parthians and the Romans were equally anxious to secure its alliance in all their wars. After his victories over the Parthians, Trajan united this republic to the Roman empire. Commerce, however, did not abandon Palmyra; its wealth continued to increase, and its opulent citizens covered their paternal soil with those superb specimens of Greek architecture, which still astound the traveller who beholds them, rising in lonely grandeur out of the sands of the desert. Nothing remains of Palmyra but these ruins, and the brilliant and romantic story of Zenobia. This extraordinary woman was the daughter of an Arab scheik; she declared herself descended from Cleopatra, whom she, however, far surpassed in dignity and in virtue. Zenobia owed her power only to the services she rendered to her country. During the reign of Gallienus, when the empire was attacked on every side, when Valerian was prisoner to the king of Persia, and Asia was inundated with his armies, Zenobia emboldened her husband Odenatus, a rich senator of Palmyra, to resist the invasion of the Persians, of his own authority, and with no other aid than that of his fellow-citizens and the Arabs of the desert. She shared all her husband's toils and dangers, whether in the field, or in his favourite sport, lion-hunting. She defeated Sapor, pursued him twice up to the very gates of Ctesiphon, and reigned, at first, in conjunction with Odenatus, and, after his death, alone, over Syria and Egypt, which were hers by conquest. Trebellius Pollio, a contemporary writer, who saw her on that fatal occasion when she was led in triumph to Rome (A. D. 273), paints her thus: it is the ideal of a lofty Arab beauty: —

“ Zenobia received those who came to pay her homage with Persian pomp, exacting the sort of adoration paid to eastern monarchs; but at table she followed the Roman customs. When she addressed the people, she appeared with a helmet on her head and her arms bare; but a mantle of purple, adorned with gems, partly co-

vered her person. Her countenance was of an aquiline cast; her complexion was not brilliant, but her black eyes, of singular radiance, were animated with a celestial fire, and an inexpressible grace. Her teeth were of such dazzling whiteness, that it was commonly thought she had substituted pearls for those nature had given her. Her voice was clear and harmonious, yet manly. On occasion, she knew how to show a tyrant's severity; but she delighted rather in the clemency of good princes. Beneficent with wisdom and moderation, she husbanded her treasure in a manner little common among women. She was to be seen at the head of her armies in her car, on horseback, or foot, but rarely in a more luxurious carriage."

Such was the woman who vanquished Sapor, and who gave her confidence to the sublime Longinus, the instructor of her children, and her prime minister.

Up to the year 226 of the Christian era, the Roman territory was bounded by Parthia on its eastern border: after that period, the Persian Sassanides were their neighbours on the same frontier. The Parthians, a Celtic tribe, sprung from Bactriana, had founded their empire 256 years before Christ. They had conquered Persia from the Caspian Sea up to the Persian Gulf. This vast territory, bounded by two seas, by lofty mountains, and sandy deserts, has almost always formed an independent state difficult to attack, and almost incapacitated from acquiring or maintaining distant possessions. For nearly five centuries of domination, the Parthians remained strangers amid the subject Persians. They had given to their monarchy a form somewhat resembling the feudal governments of Europe. Their kings, of the family of the Arsacides, had granted small tributary sovereignties to a great number of the princes of their house, and to other men of high birth. All this nobility, indeed the whole of the victor race, were mounted for the field. Several Greek colonies preserved their republican institutions and their independence in the midst of the monarchy; but the Per-

sians were not trusted either with civil power, or with the use of arms, and were held in complete subjection.

These Persians were urged to revolt by Artaxerxes, or Ardshir, founder of the dynasty of the Sassanides; who, after his victories, declared himself descended from those kings of Persia who had bowed to the victorious arms of Alexander the Great. He was yet more powerfully seconded by religious enthusiasm, than by the feeling of national honour or independence. The ancient religion of Zoroaster was once more placed on the throne. The belief in the two principles, Ormusd and 'Ahriman, the revelation of the Zenda Vesta; the worship of fire or light, as the representative of the Good Principle; the horror of temples and images; the power of the magi, which extended to the most indifferent actions of every true believer; the spirit of persecution (cruelly displayed against the Christians when they began to spread over Persia), were re-established by a national council, in which 80,000 magi assembled on the convocation of Artaxerxes.

The Persians affirmed that the sceptre of these kings extended over 40,000,000 of subjects; but the population of the countries of the East has always been imperfectly known. The numbers usually given in history have been taken from the hyperbolical reports of their writers, and not from any statistical documents. The Persians can neither be classed with civilised nations, nor with barbarians; though the Greeks and Romans always gave them the latter appellation. They had acquired those arts which minister to luxury and effeminacy, but not those which refine or elevate the taste; they had laws, emanating from despotic power, which preserve order, but which secure to a nation neither justice nor happiness; they had that literary culture which feeds the imagination, but does not enlighten the understanding; their religion, that of the two principles, and their aversion for idolatry, satisfied the reason, but did not purify the heart. It was at this

stage of civilisation, which contains within itself an obstacle to all further progress, that the people of the East founded great empires, while man never attained the highest excellence and dignity of which he is capable. Artaxerxes (A. D. 226—238), and his son Sapor (A. D. 238—269), achieved great victories over nations protected by the Romans, and even over the Romans themselves. But their monarchy experienced the fate of all despotic governments, until its total subversion by the Mussulmans in 651. Its history is composed of treachery and massacre in the royal family, the members of which hurled each other from the throne in rapid succession; of long periods devoted to vice, or to an effeminate indolence, broken only by flashes of ambition, leading to desolating wars.

The Parthians had conquered Armenia, which lay between their territory and that of the Romans, and had placed on the throne of Artaxata, the Armenian capital, a younger branch of their own kings, the Arsacides. Liberty has ever been unknown in Armenia. The lofty mountains which surround the country failed to inspire the inhabitants with the courage which is the ordinary characteristic of mountaineers. The Armenians were patient, industrious, but always subdued and dependent. At the time of the fall of the Parthian empire, they were conquered by Artaxerxes and by Sapor. Nevertheless, Tiridates, heir of their ancient line of kings, threw off the Persian yoke in the year 297, and, with the aid of the Romans, rendered Armenia independent. His reign (A. D. 297—342) is regarded by the Armenians as the period of their glory. It was at this time that they adopted the Christian religion, which cemented their alliance with the Romans; it was then that they invented the written character still in use among them; that they produced a literature which they still regard with admiration, —an admiration, however, confined to themselves; —lastly, that they began to translate the Bible and some Greek works, which have been found among

them in our own times. This prosperity was not of long continuance. At the death of Tiridates, their fate was that which must ever await a nation which risks its happiness, its existence, on the chances of succession of an absolute monarchy.

Such were the countries of Asia which bordered on the Roman territory. But to the north of Caucasus, of Thibet, and of the mountains of Armenia, a race of men existed entirely different from those we have described ; a race free and untamed ; not bound to the soil they inhabited ; a terror to all their neighbours, and destined to exercise a disastrous influence over the fate of Rome. This was the countless nomad people comprehended under the name of Scythians, or Tartars. The Tartar race was spread over the whole extent of country (measuring from west to east) from the shores of the Black Sea, where it touches on the Slavonic tribes, to the sea of Japan and the Kurile Islands, or to the great wall of China ; and, from north to south, from the neighbourhood of the frozen sea, to the lofty chain of Thibet, which separates the cold regions of northern from the burning climes of southern Asia, leaving no temperate district between. The centre of Asia seems to be composed of a vast table-land, which rises to the level of our highest mountains, and which its temperature unfits for any very varied cultivation, though its boundless steppes are clothed by nature with a luxuriant vegetation. In these boundless plains, the Tartar tribes have, from the most remote antiquity, preserved the same manners and the same mode of life. They have invariably despised the labours of tillage ; have subsisted solely on the produce of their herds and flocks ; and have as invariably shown the utmost readiness to follow, not as an organised army, but as an armed nation, any chieftain who would lead them on to the plunder of more temperate regions, and of more civilised nations. The men live on horseback, or in their tents, holding nothing honourable but war, nothing venerable but the sword, which was formerly the emblem

of their sanguinary divinity. The women follow the men in covered cars, which contain their families and all their wealth, and which are, during half the year, their only dwelling place. Their contempt for the sedentary arts is unchangeable : they esteem it an honour or a duty to destroy, to extirpate, the civilisation which they detest, and regard as hostile ; and if a chief, endowed with the talents of Attila, Zengis, or Timur, were now to spring up among them, they would be as eager as ever to rear the horrible trophies which marked their conquests — the pyramids of heads for which Timur, the most humane of the three, ordered the massacre of 70,000 inhabitants of Ispahan, and 90,000 of Bagdad. Now, as then, they would, perhaps, propose to rase every edifice, every wall, that, to use their favourite expression, no obstacle might arrest the career of their lightning-footed steeds.

But though their character is unaltered, their numbers are no longer the same ; the inhabitants of Siberia, and of all the borders of the frozen ocean, subdued by the rigour of the climate and by their necessities, have established themselves in permanent dwellings, and submitted to the Russian yoke. The inhabitants of the valleys of Thibet, subjugated by a stern theocracy, have lost their energy in the convents of the grand lama. Independent Tartary, the country of the Kalmucs, the Usbecs, the Mongols, is very much narrowed : it occupies only a third of the space it occupied in the time of the Romans ; still, however, its extent is prodigious, and its population may yet visit Asia with new revolutions.

The Tartars have continued free. It would be difficult to establish a despotism in the midst of boundless plains ; unsupported by fortresses or prisons, by standing armies, by police, or courts of justice. The sovereignty resides in the Couroultai, or assembly of the nation, to which all the free men repair on horseback. Here they decide on peace and war ; frame and promulge laws, and administer justice. Domestic slavery has, in all

ages, formed a part of their system of manners: the absence of all cultivation of the land, is a security for the slave's obedience; his only food is what he receives from the hand of his master; he has no means of existing without the milk and the flesh of the herds he tends; and, if he attempted to flee into the boundless steppes where nature has provided no sustenance for man, he would soon perish from hunger. Besides, although the Tartar has the right of life and death over his slave, he usually treats him with considerable mildness, and regards him as a member of his family: he even trusts him with arms for the defence of his camp and his flocks. Where civilisation has not refined the manners, and separated the ranks of society by an impassable distance, similar occupations, common wants, and common toils, compel man to recognise man in his slave; while the boundless extent given to the paternal authority confounds the son with the slave, and thus tends yet further to obliterate the distinction. The chief, or khan, of a Tartar family rejoices in the increase of his children and of his serfs, as much as in that of his flocks and herds. Thus, without emerging from a private station, he sometimes finds himself at the head of an army; he has yearly to remove his tents from summer to winter pastures, and thus, in the exercise of his domestic economy, to plan and conduct great military marches. His children and his slaves are ready to second him in all his quarrels, to revenge all insults to his honour, if he receive any aggression or affront from a neighbour or from a superior. These petty feuds have often been the first cause of the great revolutions of Asia. Often, we may observe a chief, encouraged by his victories over some personal enemy, turn his arms against the rich cities of Sogdiana or Bactriana; pillage Bocchara or Samarcand, and, at length, march to the conquest of Persia, of India, China, or the West. Often, too, we see a vanquished warrior, nay, a fugitive slave, traverse the desert to escape from the vengeance of his adversary; fall in with some wandering horde; go



on increasing the number of his troop; and, at length, appear as a conqueror on the frontiers of civilised countries.

Every incident of pastoral life is a preparation for war. The constant habit of braving the inclemency of the seasons, and the attacks of wild beasts; the science of the encampments, and the marches which form a part of daily life; habitual temperance, and yet great facility in obtaining food; for the flocks of the Tartars follow the armies, which are but bands of their shepherds. In fact, in the Scythian tribes, every man is a soldier, and the foe whom they attack or invade has not an army, but a nation to contend with. This explains the phenomenon, which appears at first sight inexplicable, of a desert pouring down, upon popular and civilised countries, torrents of armed men. This northern region, which has been called the Mother of Nations, does not teem with such a superabundance of life. A shepherd can hardly exist on the quantity of land which would feed twenty husbandmen; but when a million of inhabitants issue forth from a region far superior to Europe in extent, there would be among them at least 200,000 men capable of bearing arms; and this number is frequently sufficient to overthrow an empire. The country they have abandoned remains a desert, and there is no proof that it has ever contained more inhabitants than it could support.

The stream of emigration from Grand Tartary has taken its course, alternately, to the east, the west, and the south. At the time of the overthrow of the Roman empire, the whole force of the Tartar tribes seemed directed towards the west. An empire formerly powerful, the first monarchy of the Huns, had been overthrown by the Sienpi, at a distance of 500 leagues from the Roman frontier, and near to that of China, in the first century of the Christian era. Driven from their own country, the Huns had invaded their neighbours, and had pushed them onwards towards the west. But their wars and their conquests would have been con-



finned within the wide plains of Tartary, had not the thousands of Roman captives, and the immense treasure carried off by the northern tribes, during the disastrous reign of Gallienus, been diffused by commerce over the whole north of Asia. The dexterity and talents of the slaves, the splendour of the costly stuffs exposed to sale in the markets of Tartary, tempted this warlike race to go in quest of similar treasures in the countries where they were to be bought, not with gold, but with blood; and the recollection of former pillage was the great cause of the repetition of such incursions.

The Tartar race is remarkable in the eyes of all others for its ugliness. A large head, a dun yellow complexion, small and sunken eyes, a flat nose, a thin and feeble beard, broad shoulders, and a short, square body, are the physical characteristics of the nation. The Tartars seem conscious of their own deformity: in all their treaties with conquered nations, they invariably exacted an annual tribute of young girls; and this intermixture of races has gradually corrected the hideousness of form among those established in milder climates.

The first of this race known to the Romans were the Alani. In the fourth century they pitched their tents in the country between the Volga and the Tanaïs, at an equal distance from the Black Sea and the Caspian. It does not appear that they struck the Europeans by their ugliness. But when the Taifalæ, the Huns, the Hungarians, the Turks, successively showed themselves upon their frontiers, the Greek writers expressed a feeling of horror at their aspect, which their southern neighbours, the Negroes and Abyssinians, had never excited among them.

We now come to the barbarous tribes of Europe;—those with whom we are more immediately connected, and whose history it imports us the most to know. Three great races of men, differing in language, habits, and religion, appear to have originally shared between them this western and northern portion of the antient world—the Celts or Kelts, the Slavonians, and the Ger-

mans. Historians have often confounded them, from that strange national vanity which led them to attribute to their progenitors the conquests and ravages of the neighbouring race : as if their own did not furnish them with enough of crimes and of cruelties. Of these three races, two, the Celtic and the Slavonic, were almost completely subjugated in the third century ; the third, on the contrary, was destined to triumph over Rome. The Celtic race had in part peopled Italy and Spain, where it had been blended with the Iberian, which was probably of African extraction. It had also spread over Gaul and Great Britain. It had emerged from the first stage of barbarism ; had built towns, had practised agriculture and some of the arts of life, had amassed riches, and established gradations of rank in cities, which indicate a structure of society, if not very scientific, at least very ancient. But the progress of the Celts in the career of improvement had been stopped by their submission to the oppressive yoke of a strongly organised body of priests. The Druids, jealous of every authority that did not emanate from themselves, established a reign of terror over a people whom it was their policy to render ferocious. Their deities required continual streams of human blood to be shed upon their altars. Their worship, performed in the depth of forests impervious to the sun, or in subterranean caverns, was marked by the most horrible rites. The country of the Carnuti, now called Chartres, was the centre of their power and the sanctuary of their religion. The mistletoe was regarded as the type of the divinity, and was gathered by them yearly with solemn ceremonies. But the Celtic race had seldom been able to withstand the Roman arms. Augustus had forbidden the Druids to sacrifice human victims. Claudius had broken up their associations, abolished their institutions, and destroyed their sacred woods. All the men of the higher classes in Gaul, Spain, and Britain, had received a Roman education. They had renounced the language and the faith of their fathers ; the agricultural population, whose

condition was little better than that of slaves, had either perished from want, or had learned the language of their oppressors ; and the Celtic race, once spread over a third part of Europe, had nearly disappeared. Their manners and their language were to be found only in a part of Armorica, or Little Britain, in the western parts of Great Britain and Ireland, where the Roman domination was comparatively recent, and the numbers small ; and lastly, in the mountains of Caledonia, inhabited by the Scots, the only people of Celtic or Gaëlic blood, who have retained their independence from the earliest times to the present day.

The fate of the Slavonic tribes had not been much more prosperous: they originally occupied the whole Illyrian peninsula, with the exception of Greece: its language is, in consequence, still called Illyrican. They had extended from the banks of the Danube and the Black Sea to the frozen ocean. Possessors of the most extensive plains of Europe,—plains which had been fertilised by deposits of the mud of mighty rivers,—the Slaves were tillers of the ground from the remotest period. But the soil which fed, served to enchain them. They were not strong enough to defend its fruits, earned by the sweat of their brow, and they did not choose to lose them. They were invaded by all their neighbours; to the south by the Romans, to the east by the Tartars, to the west by the Germans; and their very name, which, in their own tongue, signifies *glorious*, is become, in all modern languages, the badge of servitude ; a remarkable monument of the oppression of a great people, and of the abuse of victory on the part of all its neighbours.

All the Slavonic nations, to the south of the Danube, had been subjugated by the Romans. It is possible, however, that, in the lofty mountains of Bosnia, Croatia, and Morlachia, a portion of this race which had never been civilised, might have preserved a wild kind of independence. Indeed, after the fall of the empire we find traces of such a people ; and it has retained to this day the language, the passion for war, the habits of violence

and plunder, proper to the Slavonic tribes. To the north of the Black Sea, the Russians, one of the most powerful nations of this race, had not defended their fruitful plains against the invasion of the Alans, who were soon followed by the Huns, and other Tartar tribes. The Slavonians who occupied Russia and a part of Poland, were subject to the incursions of various tribes of the Gothic or Germanic family, which had issued forth from Scandinavia. In the fourth century, the Romans knew no other independent Slavonic people than the Quadi, the Sarmati and the Gepidæ, who with difficulty preserved some remnant of their ancient territory in Bohemia and Poland. At that period the Sarmatian horseman was esteemed more formidable for the extreme rapidity of his movements, than for his valour. He had usually two or three led horses, and changed as often as the one he rode was fatigued. In the absence of iron, he pointed his spears with bone hardened, and often poisoned. His cuirass was composed of laminæ of horn placed closely over each other, like the scales of fish. Like the Cosack of the present day, he preceded the most formidable armies, and shared in their successes, and in their plunder; but he exhibited little bravery in attack, little firmness in defence, and inspired little terror.

Lastly, the whole north of Europe was occupied by that great Germanic race from which the nations of modern Europe more immediately derive their origin. The Tartars had issued forth to destroy — the Germans advanced to conquer and to reconstruct: their very names are connected with our present existence. Saxons, Franks, Almain\*, Burgundians, Lombards, either already occupied, or were on the point of occupying, the countries in which we find them still; they spoke a language which many among them still speak; they brought with them opinions, prejudices, customs, of which there are abundant traces around us. Throughout the vast extent of Germania, in which Scandinavia must be in-

\* I have used this nearly obsolete translation of *Allemands* — which name of a tribe the French use to represent the whole race. — (*Trans.*)

cluded, the sentiment of haughty independence was predominant over every other, and had determined the national constitution and manners. The Germans were barbarians, but it was in some degree because they resolved to be so : they had set those first steps in the career of civilisation which are generally the most difficult ; and there they stopped short, from the fear of compromising their liberty. The example of the Romans, with whom continual conflicts had brought them acquainted, had persuaded them that it was impossible to unite elegance and the pleasures of life, with the haughty and resolute independence they prized above all other possessions. They were not ignorant of the useful arts : they knew how to work in metal, and were expert and ingenious in the fabrication of their weapons ; but they looked on every sedentary occupation with contempt. They did not choose to shut themselves up within the walls of cities, which appeared to them the prisons of despotism. The Burgundians, who were then established on the shores of the Baltic, lost the respect of their countrymen, because they had consented to inhabit *burgs* (whence they derive their name), and to exercise mechanical employments. The Germans practised agriculture ; but, lest the labourer should become too strongly attached to the soil ; lest by seizing his property, it might be possible to secure his person ; lest wealth should become the object of his desires, instead of military glory ; not only did they resolve that the land should be distributed among all the citizens in equal portions, they also decreed that the portion each cultivated should be annually determined by lot, so as to render impossible any local attachment. The effect of this was, of course, to render equally impossible any permanent improvement. The Teutonic tribes appear to have possessed a kind of written character, the Runic, but it seems that they used it only for inscriptions on wood or stone. The length of time required for works of this kind would, of course, render the use of it extremely rare ; the inanimate object which, by the aid of

these inscriptions, seemed to speak a language known only to the sage, appeared to the people endowed with a supernatural power ; and the knowledge of the Runes was looked upon as a branch of magic.

The government of the Germans, so long as they inhabited their own country, was the freest of which we have any record. They had kings : the Romans, at least, translated the title *könig* by their own word *rex*, though the functions were widely different. They were frequently hereditary, or were, at least, always chosen out of one family, the only one which had a common name. These kings, distinguished from their subjects by their long flowing hair, were, however, in fact, only presidents of the councils of war or of justice, in which every citizen had a voice. They commanded all warlike expeditions ; they presided over the distribution of the spoil ; they proposed to the people the measures for their consideration ; they kept up intercourse with neighbouring nations ; but, if any weakness or vice rendered them unworthy to lead freemen, the war-axe soon executed justice upon them : for it seems to have been the opinion among them, that preeminent honour must be bought by exposure to preeminent danger ; and that the life of a king ought not to be hedged in with so many securities as that of a subject. In fact, almost every page of German history is stained by the murder of a king. But private citizens were not exposed to the same risks. Not only had the king no right to put them to death, but even the sovereign power of the *Mallum*, or assembly of the people, did not extend to that. The man from whom society withdrew its protection, was still at liberty to quit the country. Exile was the severest punishment the sovereign power could inflict.

The Germans were obedient to no authority but that of their women and their priests. In the former they acknowledged somewhat of a divine nature : they thought beauty must have a kind of inspiration, and they received the voice of their prophetesses as the

voice of Heaven. The priests owed their influence as much to their own policy as to the superstitious temper of the people. The northern divinities were warlike, and their example and their worship were more calculated to form the minds of their votaries to valour and independence than to fear. The unknown world, peopled with spirits who rose from the grave, who sat upon the clouds, whose wailings were heard floating in the night winds, and mingled with the voice of the storm, had been created or clothed with all their terrors by the German imagination. Nevertheless, this was not, strictly speaking, religion. These superhuman powers were not those of the Deity ; their possessors were malevolent beings, whose perfidy was as much to be dreaded as their force ; they were foes against whom it was necessary to contend ; and the priests of Odin seemed hardly to have any succour to offer against that pale shadow, the dread king of the spirits of the forest, or the terrible *Valkyries*, who spun the thread of human destiny.

The German priests were not united into a compact body ; they had not that rigorous organisation and discipline which rendered the Druids so terrible, and gave such stability to their power. Nor did the German people seem to hold to their religion with very ardent zeal : they were easily converted to Christianity, whenever their kings set them the example ; and it is remarkable that, in the history of their conversions, we find no tradition of the opposition which it would have been natural to expect from their priests. But the chiefs themselves appear to have turned the sacerdotal power to political account. They placed the police of the public meetings under the immediate protection of the gods ; and the priest alone, under the authority of the king, ventured to inflict the punishment of death on any man who disturbed the deliberations of the national assembly or *Mallum*. This was only to be effected by treating the offence as sacrilege, for no insult



to the civil power would have subjected him to the sword of the law.

The Germans who attacked the empire appeared under various names ; and these names, sometimes abandoned, and sometimes resumed after a considerable lapse of time, throw a great confusion over the geography of ancient Germany, and the classification of nations who frequently shifted their place of abode. We shall only endeavour to recall to the minds of our readers a small number of the most remarkable. On the lower Rhine were the Franks ; on the upper, the Allemans ; near the mouths of the Elbe, the Saxons : these three nations, who held possession of the land of their fathers, were all formed of confederations of small states, or tribes more ancient still, which had united for their common defence, and had dropped their original name about the middle of the third century, and taken generic names, such as Franken, or free men ; Allemannen, or all men ; Sachsen or Sassen, cultivators \*, or, to take a cognate word in our own tongue, settlers. There were also Schwaben†, or wandering men. In each of these federative nations there were as many kings as small states ; and, almost, as villages : but, for their most important expeditions, or most dangerous wars, they all united round one common leader.

On the shores of the Baltic, in Prussia and Central Germany, were found the Vandals, the Heruli, the Lombards, and the Burgundians, who were regarded as originally sprung from the same stem, and differing from the more western Germans in their dialect and in the form of their government ; this was more purely military, and seemed to have been consolidated during migrations of which they retained only vague and uncertain traditions.

Lastly, in Poland, and, more recently, in Transylvania, we find the great race of the Goths, who, issuing in three divisions from Scandinavia, first planted them-

\* *Saas*, an inhabitant.

† *Schweben*, to float. (Modern German). Translator.



selves near the mouths of the Vistula, and afterwards advanced southward as far as the banks of the Danube. The Wisigoths or West Goths, the Ostrogoths, or East Goths, and Gepidæ (draggers), formed these three divisions, who were distinguished among the Germanic tribes by superior cultivation of mind, gentler manners, and a greater disposition to advance in the career of civilisation. We shall soon, however, see what was this gentleness, and what was the condition of civilised nations when they were reduced to place their last hope in Ostrogoths and Wisigoths.

## CHAP. IV.

DIVISION OF THE FOURTH CENTURY INTO THREE PERIODS :

1. REIGN OF CONSTANTINE. 2. REIGNS OF HIS SONS AND NEPHEWS. 3. REIGNS OF VALENTINIAN AND HIS SUCCESSORS, DOWN TO THEODOSIUS. — CHARACTER OF CONSTANTINE. — HIS WAVERINGS BETWEEN PAGANISM AND CHRISTIANITY. — HIS CRUELITIES. — SIX EMPERORS AT ONCE. — FINAL UNION OF THE EMPIRE UNDER CONSTANTINE. — EXTERMINATION OF ALL HIS RIVALS. — FOUNDATION OF CONSTANTINOPLE. — MURDER OF ALL HIS KINDRED BY CONSTANTINE. — HIS ZEAL FOR THE CHURCH. — HIS DEATH. — DIVISION OF THE EMPIRE AMONG HIS THREE SONS. — THEIR WARS. — CONSTANTIUS, THE SURVIVOR, EXCLUSIVELY OCCUPIED WITH RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES. — DONATIST AND CIRCONCELLION SECTS, THEIR QUARRELS AND ATROCITIES. — RELIGIOUS SUICIDES. — ARIAN CONTROVERSY. — THE CHURCH EQUALLY DIVIDED. — COUNCIL OF NICE. — FAVOURS SHOWN BY CONSTANTIUS TO ARIANISM. — OPPOSITION OF ST. ATHANASIOS. — CONQUESTS OF SAPOR II. IN THE EAST, AND OF THE FRANKS AND ALLEMANS IN THE WEST. — CONSTANTIUS CONFIDES TO HIS NEPHEW JULIAN THE DEFENCE OF THE WEST. — CHARACTER OF JULIAN. — HIS ATTACHMENT TO THE ANCIENT RELIGION. — HIS VICTORIES AND DEATH.

AFTER endeavouring to give some general notion of the internal state of the Roman empire in its decline, of the revolutions it had passed through, of the barbarians who hung over its frontiers, and menaced its existence, we come at length to the epoch which we have marked at the starting-point, whence to proceed in our examination of this portion of the middle or dark ages. This is, the coronation of the emperor Constantine by the legions of Britain, at York, on the 25th of July, A. D. 306.

The limits assigned to works belonging to this series, do not, however, permit us to lay before our readers a complete, detailed narrative of the fall of the Roman empire, and the establishment of the barbaric monarchies. This is to be found in several celebrated

writers, to whose voluminous works we might refer our readers, or, still better, to the study and comparison of the ancient authorities. History can be effectually studied only in the seclusion of the closet; in the patient examination of original writers, and the accurate collation of evidence. All that we can affect to accomplish in the narrow space assigned to us is, to bring together the most striking pictures, to try to arrange them distinctly in the mind, and to show the general tendency of events. The most brilliant periods, the reigns which can be most easily studied in works devoted expressly to them, are precisely those which we shall think ourselves justified in passing over the most rapidly. But all have not leisure for such a course of study; and, perhaps, even for those who have passed through it, a brief recapitulation of the general facts will be useful, and may repair the losses, or correct the inaccuracies, of memory.

The fourth century may be naturally divided into three periods, of nearly equal length. The reign of Constantine, from the year 306 to 337; that of his sons and his nephews, from 337 to 363; and the reigns of Valentinian, of his sons, and of Theodosius, from 364 to 395. During the first, the ancient empire of Rome, the empire of Augustus, gave place to a new monarchy, whose throne stood on the confines of Europe and of Asia, with other manners, another character, and another religion. During the second, this religion, passing from a state of persecution to one of sovereignty, experienced the fatal effects almost invariably attached to a prosperity too rapid, a power too recent. The violence of religious dissensions, during this period, silenced all secular controversies, all political passions. During the third period, the empire, shaken anew by the general attack of the barbarians, narrowly escaped complete subversion. The following chapter is intended to give a sketch of the first two periods only.

We have seen that Diocletian, after appointing four

heads to the military despotism which ruled the empire, induced his colleague, Maximian, to abdicate the throne at the same time with himself, on the 1st of May, A.D. 305. The two Cæsars, Constantius Chlorus in Gaul, and Galerius in Illyricum, were then elevated to the rank of Augusti; while two new Cæsars, Severus and Maximin, were appointed to second them. But from the moment that Diocletian ceased to moderate the hatred and the jealousy of the subalterns whom he thought fit to honour with the name of colleagues, the government which he had given to the empire was a scene of constant confusion and civil war, till the period at which all the colleagues fell in succession, and gave place, in the year 323, to the solitary rule of Constantine.

Constantine had not been called to the succession. Diocletian, partial to Galerius, his son-in-law, had left the nomination of the two new Cæsars to him. Constantius Chlorus, who had led a division of the Gallic legions into Britain to oppose the incursions of the Caledonians, was then ill; and Galerius, sure of the support of his two creatures, waited impatiently for the death of his rival, to unite the whole Roman empire under his own sway. But the moderation and justice of Constantius had rendered him the more dear to the soldiers and the provincials under his command, from their contrast with the ferocity of his colleagues. At the moment of his death, the legions stationed at York, as a tribute of gratitude and affection to his memory, saluted his son Constantine with the title of Cæsar, and decorated him with the purple. Whatever resentment Galerius felt at this, he soon perceived the danger of engaging in a civil war. As the eldest of the emperors, and the representative of Diocletian, he recognised the authority of the colleague imposed upon him by the legions. He left him the administration of Gaul and Britain, but assigned to him only the fourth rank among the rulers of the empire, and the title of Cæsar. Under this title Constantine administered the prefecture of Gaul for six years (A. D. 306—312),

perhaps the most glorious and the most virtuous period of his life.

Nature had endowed Constantine, then thirty years old, with qualities that command respect. His person was dignified, his countenance noble and gracious, his strength remarkable even among legionaries, and his courage brilliant even in the estimation of the bravest. Although his mind had not been formed by a liberal education, it was quick and facile ; his conversation was lively, only he was too much addicted to raillery for a man whom it is impossible to rally in return. The grandeur of his conceptions, the firmness of his character, and his consummate talents for war, gave him a high rank among generals and statesmen. Happy would it have been for him, if fortune, which with a rare constancy, favoured all his enterprises, had not, by her indulgence, fostered and revealed his vices ; if the height to which he attained had not made him giddy ; if the drunkenness of absolute power had not altered his character ; and if every advance towards the acquisition of a new power had not been outweighed by the loss of a virtue.

From the time of his elevation to the throne, Constantine wavered between paganism and Christianity ; and throughout his prefecture he granted perfect toleration to all religious opinions. In this he only followed the example of his father, who had sheltered the provinces under his rule from the persecutions of Diocletian. Gaul was, indeed, the part of the empire in which we find the fewest martyrs. The Christian religion had made very little progress there ; but the tolerance of Constantine, contrasted with the ferocity of the persecutions of Galerius and the two Cæsars, attracted a great number of refugees to the countries under his sway, and thus caused a rapid spread of the new religion in the West.

After pacifying Britain, Constantine had led back his army into Gaul. He had lessened the weight of taxation ; and we learn that the town of Autun ex-

pressed its gratitude to him, for lightening the pressure of the capitation, or poll-tax. The moment the Franks encamped on the banks of the Rhine, learned the death of his father, they crossed the river, and laid waste a part of Gaul. Constantine marched against them at the head of the British legions; defeated them; made a great number of prisoners; and, at the celebration of the games in his capital of Trèves, he caused these captives to be thrown to wild beasts. They were devoured before the eyes of a people by whom this spectacle was hailed with rapturous applause. Among the victims, the most remarkable were two Frankish kings, Ascaric and Regais. This is the earliest tradition we have of the first race of sovereigns of France.

It did not enter the mind of Constantine, nor of those by whom he was surrounded, that any humanity could be due to the vanquished, any compassion to barbaric kings. In a panegyric addressed to him, and recited in his presence, this act is especially celebrated; and the torture inflicted on these two Frankish kings is extolled above the most glorious of his victories. But Constantine was hereafter, and repeatedly, to shed blood far more sacred in his eyes; his ambition was untempered by pity, and his jealousy of power stifled the most powerful feelings of nature in his breast.

During this time the senate and the people of Rome, abandoned by all the emperors, who had fixed their residence in the provinces, irritated by the announcement of fresh taxes, conferred the rank of Augustus on Maxentius, son of Maximian (A. D. 306), who, like Constantine, had not been raised by Galerius to the rank of Cæsar, to which he seemed to have claims. At this intelligence the aged Maximian, who had been reluctantly drawn into an abdication to which his constant restlessness continually gave the lie, hastened to resume the purple, in order to protect his son and to assist him with his counsels. He gave his daughter Fausta in marriage to Constantine, and conferred on him the title of Augustus; and he claimed from the whole West, go-

verned by his son and his son-in-law, that deference which those two princes owed to the eldest head of the empire, and the author of their own greatness. But love of power can ill be reconciled in royal minds with the plebeian virtues of filial affection and gratitude. The veteran, illustrious from his numerous victories, was driven out of Italy by his son Maxentius; repulsed from Illyricum by his ancient colleague, Galerius; and permitted to take refuge in Gaul by Constantine, only on condition that he would a second time renounce the supreme power he had resumed. He lived for some time in the Narbonnese province; but on the report of the death of Constantine (probably spread by Maximian himself), he once more resumed the purple. Constantine put himself at the head of his legions, and instantly marched to Marseilles, where he besieged Maximian, caused him to be delivered into his hands by the soldiers of the town, and to be strangled (Feb. A. D. 310).

For two whole years the empire had had six emperors at a time, all recognised as legitimate. But the death of Maximian was followed by that of Galerius, in May, 311, after a dreadful illness. Four Augusti, of equal rank, now once more shared the four prefectures. Scarcely, however, had they proclaimed to the empire their union, when they began to plan each other's dethronement. Maxentius had exercised an odious tyranny over Italy and Africa; he had plundered, persecuted, and dishonoured the senate, which had placed him on the throne; and, while he gave himself up without reserve to shameful pleasures, he lavished the money he extorted from the citizens by infamous confiscations, on the soldiers, on whom he placed his sole reliance. Maximin, who reigned over the East, was neither less cruel, nor less hateful to the people. Constantine offered his alliance, and the hand of his sister, to Licinius, the third of the Augusti, who governed Illyricum, and abandoned to him the conquest of the East, reserving to himself that of Italy and Africa. He passed the Alps



at the head of the Gallic legions; gained three great victories, at Turin, at Verona, and before the gates of Rome, over those of Maxentius, which that dastardly and effeminate ruler did not venture to command in person. After the third, which took place on the 3d of October, 312, the head of Maxentius, for whom Constantine had little reason to feel as a brother-in-law, was exhibited to the people, severed from the trunk. Constantine was received in Rome with acclamations; Africa acknowledged him, as well as Italy; and an edict of religious toleration, issued at Milan, extended the advantages, hitherto enjoyed by Gaul alone, to this prefecture. Licinius was not less successful against Maximin, and the use he made of his victory perhaps spared Constantine the commission of some crimes. Licinius put to death all the sons of Maximin, all the sons of Galerius, and all the sons of Severus, that none might remain to carry into a private station the memory of their father's power. Even the wife and daughter of Diocletian, who were known to him only by the benefits he had received at their hands, and by the respect of the people, fell victims to his ruthless ambition. He would suffer no rival claims to the throne, and he left nothing for Constantine to do in the work of extermination. The two allies and brothers-in-law, thus left masters of the field, immediately prepared for combat. In the first civil war, A. D. 315, Constantine wrested Illyricum from Licinius. After an interval of eight years, war was renewed. Licinius was beaten before Adrianople, on the 3d of July, 323, and the whole empire recognised Constantine the Great as its monarch.

Constantine was a native of the western provinces. He spoke their language; there he first distinguished himself by his victories, and by a beneficent administration; there his name, and that of his father, were endeared to the people and to the soldiers. Nevertheless, one of the first uses he made of his victory was, to abandon these provinces for Greece, whither he went to



build a new Rome, to which he laboured to transfer all the luxury and the privileges of the ancient city. The latter had long been regarded with jealousy by the emperors. They dreaded a residence in a town in which the people still remembered that the sovereign power had resided in them ; in which every senator felt himself of higher nobility than the monarch ; more familiar with those elegancies and refinements of manners which are the indelible mark of aristocratic birth, and the object of humiliating desire to those who can never acquire them. Constantine wished to have a capital more modern than the imperial dignity, a senate more recent than despotism. He wished for the pomp of Rome, without her recollections, without her means of resistance. He chose Byzantium, on the Bosphorus of Thrace ; and the new capital, which took its name from him, standing on the confines of Europe and of Asia, with a magnificent port open to the commerce of the Black Sea and of the Mediterranean, has shown, by its long prosperity, by the invincible resistance it offered to its barbarian aggressors for a thousand years, how admirably sagacious was the choice of its founder.

But it was while occupied in watching the infant growth of Constantinople (A. D. 329), during the fourteen years of peace which closed his reign, that the hero descended to the common level of kings. As he approached the East, he adopted oriental manners ; he affected the gorgeous purple of the monarchs of Persia ; he decorated his head with false hair of different colours, and with a diadem covered with pearls and gems. He substituted flowing silken robes, embroidered with flowers, for the austere garb of Rome, or the unadorned purple of the first Roman emperors. He filled his palace with eunuchs, and lent an ear to their perfidious calumnies ; he became the instrument of their base intrigues, their cupidity, and their jealousy. He multiplied spies, and subjected the palace and the empire, alike, to a suspicious police. He lavished the wealth of

Rome on the sterile pomp of stately buildings. He reduced the legions from 6000 men to 1000 or 1500, through jealousy of those to whom he must have given the command of these formidable bodies. Lastly, he poured out the best and noblest blood in torrents, more especially of those nearly connected with himself.

The most illustrious victim of his tyranny was Crispus, his son by his first wife, whom he had made the partner of his empire, and the commander of his armies. Crispus was at the head of the administration of Gaul, where he gained the hearts of the people by his virtue. In the war against Licinius he had displayed singular talents, and had secured victory to the arms of Constantine. From that moment, a shameful and unnatural jealousy stifled every paternal feeling in the bosom of the monarch. The acclamations of the people sounded in his ears like the triumphs of a rival, and not the successes of a son. He detained Crispus within the palace, he surrounded him with spies and informers. At length, in the month of July, 326, he ordered him to be arrested in the midst of a grand festival, to be carried off to Pola in Istria, and there to be put to death. A cousin of Crispus, the son of Licinius and of Constantine's favourite sister, was, at the same time, sent, without trial, without even accusation, to the block. His mother implored his life in vain, and died of grief. Fausta, the daughter of Maximian, the wife of Constantine, and the mother of the three princes who succeeded him, was shortly after stifled in the bath by order of her husband.

In a palace which he had made a desert, the murderer of his father-in-law, his brothers-in-law, his sister, his wife, his son, and his nephew, must have felt the stings of remorse, if hypocritical priests and courtier bishops had not lulled his conscience to rest. We still possess the panegyric in which they represent him as a favourite of Heaven, a saint worthy of our highest veneration ; we have also several laws by which Constantine atoned for all his crimes, in the eyes of the priests, by heaping

boundless favours on the church. The gifts he bestowed on it, the immunities he granted to persons and to property connected with it, soon directed ambition entirely to ecclesiastical dignities. The men who had so lately been candidates for the honours of martyrdom, now found themselves depositaries of the greatest wealth and the highest power. How was it possible that their characters should not undergo a total change? Nevertheless, Constantine himself was hardly a Christian. Up to the age of forty (A. D. 314), he had continued to make public profession of paganism, although he had long favoured the Christians. His devotion was divided between Apollo and Jesus; and he adorned the temples of the ancient gods and the altars of the new faith with equal offerings. Cardinal Baronius severely censures the edict by which (A. D. 321) he commanded that the haruspices should be consulted. But as he advanced in age, Constantine's confidence in the Christians increased: he gave up to them the undivided direction of his conscience and the education of his children. When he felt the attacks of the disease which terminated his life at the age of sixty-three, he was formally received into the bosom of the church as a catechumen, and a few days afterwards was baptised, immediately before his death. He expired at Nicomedia, May 22. 337, after a reign of thirty-one years from the death of his father, and of fourteen from the conquest of the East.

During the whole course of his reign Constantine had struggled to reunite the divided members of the empire. His own experience had taught him what jealousy absolute power excited among colleagues; what a feeble security is given to treaties between princes by the ties of blood: yet, at his death, he once more divided the empire. Indeed, for several years, he had sent his three sons and two nephews to serve their apprenticeship in the art of ruling, at the expense of the provinces they were hereafter to govern as independent chiefs. Constantine, the eldest of the young princes, twenty-one

years of age, reigned in the province of Gaul. Constantius, a year younger, remained with his father, and was the destined ruler of the East. Constans, a youth of seventeen, was sent into Italy, which, together with Africa, was to be subject to him. Dalmatius and Hannibalianus, the emperor's two nephews, were to inherit Thrace and Pontus as their share. Scarcely had he breathed his last, when his two elder sons set about to destroy his work. Constantius artfully enticed his two cousins to his court, and excited the jealousy of the army against them. The bishop of Nicomedia produced a forged will of the emperor, in which he expressed a suspicion that he had been poisoned by his brothers, and recommended his son to avenge him. Under pretext of obeying this injunction, in less than four months after his father's death, Constantius put to death two of his uncles, seven of his cousins, among whom were his two colleagues, and a great number of other distinguished persons, allied in some way or other to the imperial family. Two children alone, Gallus and Julian, nephews of Constantine the Great, were snatched by a pious hand from this butchery.

Constantius had thus usurped the inheritance of his two cousins. Constantine II. determined on seizing that of his youngest brother. In the third year of his reign he made a descent upon Italy, in order to dethrone Constans ; but, having been surprised by an ambuscade, he was put to death, by order of his brother, on the 9th of April, 340. Constans was consequently acknowledged emperor of Gaul as well as of Italy. After a reign of ten years, he was assassinated in the Pyrenees, February 27. 350, by Magnentius, the captain of his guards, who succeeded him. It was not till three years afterwards that Constantius succeeded in recovering the West, the empire of his two brothers, from Magnentius.

This chronology of murders is nearly all that remains of the civil history of these three princes. Neither patriots, nor men whose object was personal aggrandise-

ment, could find any satisfaction in devoting themselves to political affairs. During the whole of this period, therefore, they were forgotten, and the minds of men were completely engrossed by the religious disputes which presented new fuel to the passions. It was by sectarian violence alone that a man could gain affection from the people or consideration from the court. It was by theological subtleties alone, that he could hope to move the popular passions. Those who could not be induced, nor constrained, to take up arms to defend property, life, or honour against the barbarians, eagerly seized them to force their fellow-citizens to think with themselves. All the temples of paganism were still standing, more than half the subjects of the empire still professed the ancient faith; and yet already does the history of the people over whom the sons of Constantine reigned, consist of little else than the contentions between sects of Christians.

Two great theological dissensions had broken out at the very moment at which Constantine put a stop to persecution, and while Licinius was still endeavouring to crush the church in the East. Both had a long and fatal influence on the destinies of the empire; yet the first, that of the Donatists of Africa, seems so futile, that it is impossible to explain the importance attached to it by the people, except from the novelty of religious disputes, and the universal disposition towards religious fanaticism which had been excited by passionate declamation. The Donatist controversy was not one of doctrine, but of ecclesiastical discipline; the contested election for the archbishopric of Carthage. Two competitors, Cecilius and Donatus, had been concurrently elected while the church was yet in a depressed state, and Africa subject to the tyrant Maxentius. Scarcely had Constantine subdued that province, when the two rivals referred their dispute to him. Constantine, who still publicly professed paganism, but had shown himself very favourable to the Christians, instituted a careful examination of their respective claims

which lasted from the year 312 to 315, and finally decided in favour of Cecilius. Four hundred African bishops protested against this decision ; from that time they were designated by the name of Donatists. Their number shows the progress the new faith had already made in Mauritania and Numidia. We must observe, however, that it appears nearly certain that, in Africa, every parish was under the spiritual government, not of a curate, but of a bishop.

In compliance with an order of the emperor, solicited by Cecilius, the property of the Donatists was seized and transferred to the antagonist body of the clergy. They revenged themselves by pronouncing sentence of excommunication against all the rest of the Christian world ; and declaring, that whoever did not believe the election of Donatus to be canonical, would be everlastingly damned. They even compelled all whom they converted from the hostile sect to be rebaptized, as if they were not Christians. Persecution on the one side, and fanaticism on the other, were perpetuated through three centuries, up to the period of the extinction of Christianity in Africa. The wandering preachers of the Donatist faction had no other means of living than the alms of their flocks ; their influence and consideration, therefore, depended solely on their power of heating the imaginations and working on the fears of the feeble-minded, and thus gradually diffusing over the whole congregation that moral contagion which they began by exciting in women and children. As might be expected, they outdid each other in extravagance, and soon gave into the most frantic ravings : thousands of peasants, drunk with the effect of these exhortations, forsook their ploughs and fled to the deserts of Getulia. Their bishops, assuming the title of captains of the saints, put themselves at their head, and they rushed onwards, carrying death and desolation into the adjacent provinces ; they were distinguished by the name of Circumcelliones : Africa was devastated by their ravages. They, in their turn, were delivered over to the most cruel torments whenever

they fell into the hands of the imperial officers or the orthodox party, in the hope that the severity of these examples would intimidate their followers. Such measures, however, were perfectly unsuccessful, since the palm of martyrdom was the object of their most ardent desires. Persuaded that the most acceptable offering they could make to the Deity was their own lives, they frequently stopped the affrighted traveller, and, holding a dagger to his breast, demanded of him to put them to death. Often with arms in their hands they forced their way into the courts of justice, and compelled the judges to send them to torture and to death. Often they put an end to their own existence. Those who thought themselves sufficiently prepared for martyrdom, assembled their numerous congregations at the foot of some rock or lofty tower; and there, in the midst of prayers and the chanting of litanies, they threw themselves, one after another, from the height, and expired on the ground below.

The other theological contest arose out of causes more elevated and weighty, but at the same time more inscrutable, and impossible to determine. It has divided the church from the second century of its existence; it will, perhaps, divide it to the end of time. This is, the controversy on the mystery of the Trinity. The word Trinity is found neither in the Holy Scriptures nor in the writings of the first Christians; but it had been employed from the beginning of the second century, when a more metaphysical turn had been given to the minds of men, and theologians had begun to attempt to explain the divine nature. Alexandria was one of the first cities in which the Christian religion had made proselytes among the higher classes of society. Those who had received their education in the Platonic schools which flourished in that great city, sought in the Scriptures a new light on the questions which had recently been agitated among them. The dogma of a mysterious trinity, which constituted the divine essence, had been taught by the pagan Platonists of Alexandria.



It seems to have sprung from the astonishment which the mathematical properties of numbers had excited in the minds of students of the abstract sciences. They thought they discovered something divine in these properties; and the power which numbers exercised over calculations appeared to them to extend over regions far removed from their actual influence. This illusion has been revived in every age of imperfect science. The new Platonic converts employed the terms of their peculiar system of philosophy, in the exposition of the dogmas of the Christian faith.

But whatever were the origin of these speculations, the question had no sooner descended from the lofty regions of metaphysical abstraction, to be applied to an explanation of the nature of Jesus Christ, than it acquired an importance which no Christian can contest. The Founder of the new religion, the Being who had brought upon earth a divine light, was he God, was he man, was he of an intermediate nature, and, though superior to all other created beings, yet himself created? This latter opinion was held by Arius, an Alexandrian priest, who maintained it in a series of learned controversial works between the years 318 and 325. As soon as the discussion had quitted the walls of the schools, and been taken up by the people, mutual accusations of the gravest kind took the place of metaphysical subtleties. The orthodox party reproached the Arians with blaspheming the Deity himself, by refusing to acknowledge him in the person of Christ. The Arians accused the orthodox of violating the fundamental law of religion, by rendering to the creature the worship due only to the Creator. Both maintained, with a show of reason, that their adversaries overturned the very foundations of Christianity,—the one party by denying the divinity of the Redeemer, the other the unity of the Governor of the universe. The two opinions appeared so nicely balanced, that they were alternately triumphant, and it was difficult to decide which numbered the largest body of followers; but the ardent enthusiastic spirits, the populace in all the



great cities (and especially at Alexandria), the women, and the newly-founded order of the monks of the desert, who had subjugated the force of their reason by a life of continual solitude and contemplation, were almost without exception partisans of the faith which has since been declared orthodox. The contrary opinion appeared to them an insult to the object of their most passionate devotion. That opinion, — the Arian heresy, as it was called, — was embraced by all the new Christians of the Germanic tribes ; by the people of Constantinople, and by a large portion of Asia ; by the great majority of the dignitaries of the church, and by the depositaries of the civil authority.

Constantine thought this question of dogma might be decided by an assembly of the whole church. In the year 325, he convoked the council of Nice, at which 300 bishops pronounced in favour of the equality of the Son with the Father, or the doctrine generally regarded as orthodox, and condemned the Arians to exile, and their books to the flames. In spite of this decision, the Arian opinion appeared three years afterwards to prevail among the whole clergy of the East. It was sanctioned by a synod at Jerusalem, and protected by the emperor. When Constantius ascended the throne, all the bishops and courtiers by whom he was surrounded had adopted the opinions of Arius, and had communicated them to him. The emperor, abandoning all other cares, in order to devote himself exclusively to religious controversy, became a mere theologian, and remained so during the whole of his long reign. He employed his court and wore out his own intellect in finding expressions fitted for the shades of his belief, and the fluctuations of his sentiments. Every year he convoked some fresh synod or council ; he removed bishops from their flocks ; he destroyed religion in favour of theology ; and as the bishops whom he was continually summoning from one province to another travelled at the public cost, the multiplicity of councils became a ruinous charge on the imperial treasury. But a formidable adversary

appeared, who opposed him with firmness, and rendered his efforts powerless. This was St. Athanasius, archbishop of Alexandria, who was regarded as head of the orthodox party from the year 326 to 373. He met persecution with unshaken constancy, communicated his own zeal to the fanatical populace of Alexandria and the monks of the desert; and, after a long struggle between popular commotions and military persecutions, at length secured victory to his party.

During the whole of the reigns of the three sons of Constantine, historians scarcely seem to have regarded any thing as worthy of their notice save ecclesiastical disputes; nor did the sovereign seem to think his station and office imposed any duty upon him more imperative than that of engaging in the ranks of controversy. But the people had more than one occasion to feel that they needed protection from other perils than those of heresy. During the whole of this period the East was exposed to the attacks of Sapor II., king of Persia, whose long reign, from 310 to 380, by a singular destiny, had begun some months before his birth. On the death of his father Hormidas, his mother declared herself pregnant. She was presented to the adoration of the people reclining on a bed of state; and the crown, which was placed on the bed by the magi, was supposed to cover the head of the child the nation hoped to receive from her. Sapor II. evinced much more talents and courage than could be expected from a king born on the throne. He made repeated incursions into the Roman provinces of the East. In 348, he defeated Constantius in a great battle at Singara, near the Tigris. But his invasions were always checked by the fortress of Nisibis, the bulwark of the East. Thrice he besieged it with all his forces, and was thrice repulsed.

From the time of the death of the two brothers of Constantius, the West had suffered yet more severely. In order to reconquer it from the usurper Magnentius, that emperor had incited the Germanic nations to attack

the northern frontier of Gaul, at the moment when civil war compelled Magnentius to leave the Rhine unprotected, and to march his legions into Illyricum. The Franks and Allemans consequently poured down, the former on Belgium, the latter on Alsace, and plundered and burnt forty-five of the most flourishing cities of either Gaul. Their cruelty inspired such terror, that no one throughout the remainder of the province dared to quit the shelter of the cities. Within the walls, the inhabitants cultivated portions of land amid the ruins, and trusted for subsistence to the produce of fields thus cleared by the devastating hand of the invader. But 13,000 soldiers remained to defend the whole extent of Gaul against these torrents of barbarians ; all the magazines, all the arsenals were emptied ; the treasury was exhausted ; the persons upon whom the burdens of the state rested, reduced to the uttermost distress, fled and abandoned their lands, rather than submit any longer to fiscal vexations. The defence of the West seemed to have become nearly impossible, when, in the year 355, Constantius entrusted it to his cousin Julian. The fury of persecution which he had exercised against his family had vented itself. He had promised to suffer his two cousins to live ; and as he had now reached the middle of life without natural successors, he had resolved on delegating some authority to these his nearest relatives. In 351, he had granted the dignity of Cæsar to Gallus, the brother of Julian, and had sent him to Antioch ; but as the power with which he was invested had called forth nothing but vice, Constantius recalled him in December 354, and caused him to be beheaded in prison. A few months afterwards he invested the last survivor of this once numerous family with a similar authority, and gave him Gaul to govern.

Julian had known nothing of his exalted station but its exposure to more terrible calamity ; but this had tried his courage, and fortified his soul. He had sought consolation in the philosophy of Greece, and in the

study of antiquity. He had compared the virtues of former ages with the vices and crimes of his own time, and of the race whence he sprang ; and, from a spirit of opposition to all that surrounded him, he had attached himself the more ardently to the religion of his fathers. He embraced polytheism with a fervour rare among its followers ; with a superstitious devotion seemingly incompatible with his philosophical turn. But his religion had undergone a refining process, of which himself was not conscious, from its collision with Christianity. He had adopted many of the sublimest truths of the very faith he combated ; and he thought he found them slightly veiled beneath the allegories of paganism. To him the interpreters of the antique gods were not the vulgar oracles of priests, but the divine writings of Plato and other philosophers ; and the faith so lately dominant was endeared to him by its present persecutions ; — as the unfortunate become objects of sympathy to generous minds, even at the expense of justice and of reason.

In the schools of Athens, in the pursuit of philosophy, and in the study of the ancients, Julian had acquired a knowledge of men and of things which none but a vast and commanding genius can obtain from theory alone. Passing from the most profound retirement to the command of an army and the government of a disorganised province, surrounded by spies and informers, who watched that they might destroy him, ill obeyed by his subalterns, ill seconded by his cousin's government, he raised up the humbled majesty of the empire in two glorious campaigns (A. D. 356—357). He defeated the Allemans at Strasburg, and drove them across the Rhine : during the three following years, he penetrated three several times into Germany : he struck terror into the Allemans, recalled the Franks to their ancient alliance, and admitted the bravest of their soldiers into his own ranks. He also enlisted the Gauls, who at length felt the necessity of defending their country and their personal existence. He restored

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ruined cities, filled the treasury, while he reduced the most oppressive taxes by two-thirds, and inspired the inhabitants of the West with an enthusiasm which was not unattended with danger to himself. The court of Byzantium had begun by ridiculing the philosopher turned general; but this soon gave way, in the mind of Constantius, to a feeling of bitter jealousy. In the account he rendered to the provinces of the victories obtained in Gaul, the emperor, who had never quitted the walls of Constantinople, took the credit of all these successes. It was he, as his proclamations affirmed, who, by his prudence, his valour, and his military talents, had repulsed the Germans. Julian was not even named.

The emperor's jealousy soon displayed itself by other signs. Sapor still hovered over the eastern frontier, and menaced it with fresh invasions. Constantius ordered the Gallic legions to abandon the Rhine, and march to defend the Euphrates. This was to leave both countries without defence during a whole campaign; for it was impossible to accomplish such a march in less time. But Constantius was mainly bent on separating the Cæsar from his old companions in arms; and he anticipated a sweet revenge from the discontent of the legions, compelled to quit the chilling plains of Belgium for the burning sands of Mesopotamia. But he had not calculated on all the effects of this measure. The barbarians, whose enthusiasm for Julian had led them to enlist under his banner, the Gauls, who had shaken off their habitual sloth in defence of their hearths, refused to traverse the entire Roman world at the capricious order of the emperor. They mutinied, saluted Julian with the title of Augustus, raised him aloft on a buckler, encircled his brow with the collar of a soldier, in default of a diadem; and then declared that they were ready to march into the East, not to gratify the vengeance of a jealous master, but to escort their adored chief as victor. Julian yielded to their enthusiasm. He set out towards Illyricum; but the

death of Constantius, which happened on the 3d of November, 361, and which he learned half-way, averted the horrors of a civil war. Julian was acknowledged with joy throughout the empire.

He publicly returned thanks for his success to the ancient gods, and restored the pomp of pagan worship, which had not yet become an object of the persecution directed against heretics. He admitted all the contending sects of Christians to an equal tolerance ; but this tolerance was mingled with sarcasms and expressions of contempt ; and he endeavoured to undermine the foundations of a church which he dared not attempt to overthrow by violence. He prohibited Christians from entering the schools of grammar and of rhetoric ; removed them from places of trust, and apportioned his favour to the zeal displayed in favour of polytheism. He soon achieved numerous conversions among those who are the faithful followers of power, and who have no other religion than the pleasure of the master.

Meanwhile Julian was impatient to drive the barbarians from the East, as he had already expelled them from the West. The whole remaining portion of his short reign was devoted to the preparations for his campaign against Sapor. To this end he repaired to Antioch, where he passed the winter of the year 362. At the commencement of the year 363, he marched to the invasion of Mesopotamia. But it was already obvious that he had not escaped the corrupting influence of power and prosperity. Deceived by the blind obedience of courtiers, he thought he could exercise the same haughty sway over those who were not dependent upon him. He offended the Arabs, at the very moment when he stood in need of their aid, by refusing the customary presents, and alienated the Armenians by openly contemning their religious opinions. He even fancied he could rise superior to the laws of nature, and command the elements. In spite of the remonstrances of his generals, he advanced into the sandy deserts, in which his army was exposed to thirst, fatigue, and a burning

sun. It is true that these dangers once more revealed the great and heroic qualities which prosperity had obscured. On every occasion he set his soldiers an example of that courage which endures privations, as well as of that which braves the fight. Never did he meet the enemy without defeating him. But Sapor, who did not choose to face the formidable and victorious legions of Gaul, harassed them with his light-cavalry, and retreated without suffering the enemy to come up with him. After passing the Tigris, Julian, with his panting legions, traversed the whole territory of Bagdad, where he was misled by treacherous guides. On the verge of the horizon he saw a village or a city, in which he hoped to find some repose, some provisions ; but as soon as he approached, devouring flames, kindled by the inhabitants themselves, consumed dwellings and stores, and he found only a heap of ashes. At length, on the 16th of June, 363, he was compelled to order a retreat. This was the signal for the approach of the Persians ; the light cavalry was seconded by elephants, and by the heavy iron-barbed cavalry. Every march was a combat ; every wood, every hill, concealed an ambuscade. On the 26th of June, the Romans being still at a considerable distance from the Tigris, a general attack led Julian to hope that he might still conquer the enemy who had always avoided the open fields. While with his advanced guard, he received the intelligence that his rear-guard had been thrown into disorder by a charge of cavalry. He flew to its succour with no other arms than his buckler. The Persians fled, but Julian was struck by an arrow from the bow of one of those horsemen, who were never more formidable than in their flight. It had passed through the ribs, and transfixed the liver. As he tried to draw it out of the wound, another arrow pierced his fingers. He fell from his horse, fainting and bathed in his blood, and in that state was carried to his tent. As soon as he recovered his senses he called for his horse and his arms, and insisted on going to cheer on his comrades, many



of whom he had seen trampled and crushed under the feet of the elephants. But it was too late: the blood which flowed in fresh torrents, soon exhausted his remaining strength. Being unable to raise himself, and conscious that the feebleness of death was upon him, he asked the name of the country where he had fallen. Phrygia, was the reply.—“It is there that my death was foretold,” said he. “My destiny is accomplished.”

His friends pressed around him. He to whom we are indebted for all these details,—the last of the illustrious soldiers who wrote in Latin the contemporaneous history of the Romans, Ammianus Marcellus, was present. They were in tears; and yet news had come to his tent that the Romans, infuriated at his loss, had already worthily revenged him; that Sapor’s army had taken to flight; that his two generals, fifty satraps, most of the elephants, and the bravest warriors of Persia were slain; that if Julian could once more lead on the army, the victory would be decisive.

“Friends and brothers-in-arms,” said Julian, “the time for me to retire from life is come. As an honourable debtor I ought to render back to nature, who claims her own, that soul which she entrusted to me. I have too well learned of philosophy how superior is the soul to the body now to afflict myself, nay, rather not to rejoice, that the nobler part regains its liberty. Have not the gods themselves sometimes granted death to the most pious of mortals, as the highest recompence of their virtue? This favour I am very sensible they have granted me to-day, that I might not sink under the difficulties which surround us—that I might not fall into any base or prostrate condition. As to the pains of the body, they overcome cowards, but they yield to the force of the will. I do not repent of my actions; I feel not in my conscience remorse for any great crime—neither when, hidden in the shade, I laboured to form my character and correct my faults, nor since the empire has been



bestowed upon me. I flatter myself that I have kept spotless this soul which we receive from heaven, and which has its source and its kindred there. I have sought to exercise moderation in civil government, nor have I ever undertaken or declined war without a careful examination of my rights. But success depends not on our counsels; it is for the celestial powers to direct the event of what we do but begin. I have ever thought that the end of a just authority ought to be the advantage and safety of those who obey; I have, therefore, sought to guard all my actions from that arbitrary licence which is equally injurious to affairs and corrupting to morals. I render thanks to that eternal divinity which decreed before my birth that I should not fall a victim to clandestine toils, nor to the pains, the diseases, or the violent deaths which have been the lot of all my race; but has granted me a glorious exit from this world in the midst of a career of prosperity. My ebbing strength does not permit me to say more. I think it prudent not to influence your choice in the nomination of an emperor. I might fail to distinguish the most worthy. I might expose to peril him whom I should point out to your suffrages, and whom you might not approve. My only desire is, that the republic may have a worthy head."

With his small remaining strength Julian endeavoured to distribute his effects among the friends who surrounded him. He did not see among them Anatholius, to whom he wished to leave some token of remembrance. *He also is happy*, replied Sallustius; and Julian shed, for the fate of his friend, those tears which he denied to his own. All attempts to stop a fresh effusion of blood had been vain. Julian asked for a cup of cold water, and having drunk it, instantly expired.

Jovian, whom the army appointed his successor, bought the permission to effect a disastrous retreat, by abandoning to Sapor five provinces of Armenia, with the fortress of Nisibis, the bulwark of the Eastern empire.

## CHAP. V.

JOVIAN. — DEPRESSION OF THE PAGANS. — CALAMITOUS PERIOD EMBRACED BY THIS CHAPTER. — DEATH OF JOVIAN. — ELECTION OF VALENTINIAN. — HIS CHARACTER. — GRINDING TAXATION. — SUCCESSES OF THE ROMAN ARMS. — FEEBLENESS OF VALENS. — HERMANRIC. — GOTHIC EMPIRE IN DACIA. — DEATH OF VALENTINIAN. — GRATIAN, EMPEROR OF THE WEST. — INVASION OF DACIA BY THE HUNS. — HORROR INSPIRED BY THEIR ASPECT. — DEFEAT OF THE GOTHs. — THEY CROSS THE DANUBE AND TAKE REFUGE IN THE EMPIRE. — PERFIDY AND CRUELTY OF VALENS. — REVOLT OF THE GOTHs. — DEATH OF VALENS. — MASSACRE OF THE GOTHIC HOSTAGES. — VENGEANCE TAKEN BY FRITIGERN. — THE EASTERN EMPIRE WITHOUT A HEAD. — THEODOSIUS THE GREAT CHOSEN AS COLLEAGUE, AND PROCLAIMED BY GRATIAN. — HIS TALENTS AND WISDOM. — THE GOTHs INDUCED TO LAY DOWN ARMS. — MŒSIA CEDED TO THEM. — THEIR CIVILISATION. — ULPHILAS. — INFLUENCE OF THE FRANKS AT THE COURT OF GRATIAN. — DEATH OF GRATIAN. — CHARACTER OF THEODOSIUS. — PERSECUTION OF THE ARIANS. — DISCOURAGEMENT OF PAGANISM. — ST. GREGORY OF NAZIANZEN. — ST. AMBROSE. — ST. MARTIN. — DEATH OF THEODOSIUS. — A. D. 364—395.

EVERY fresh revolution that agitated the empire, urged it another downward step into the abyss which was destined soon to engulf it. Julian's imprudent endeavour to re-establish a religion which had received its death-stroke, to weaken the influence of one which he attacked by a covert persecution, and by a system of injustice, excited the most violent resentment among his Christian subjects, and exposed his name to accusations and calumnies which have stained his memory to this day. When his successor, Jovian, who did not reign long enough to lead back to Constantinople the army which he had marched from the banks of the Tigris, made public profession of Christianity, he, at the same time, displaced a great number of brave officers and able functionaries, whom Julian had promoted in proportion

to their zeal for paganism. From that period, up to the fall of the empire, a hostile sect, which regarded itself as unjustly stripped of its ancient honours, invoked the vengeance of the gods on the heads of the government, exulted in the public calamities, and probably hastened them by its intrigues, though inextricably involved in the common ruin.

The pagan faith, which was not attached to a body of doctrine, nor supported by a corporation of priests, nor heightened by the fervour of novelty, scarcely ever displayed itself in open revolt, or dared the perils of martyrdom ; but pagans still occupied the foremost rank in letters :—the orators, the philosophers (or, as they were otherwise called, sophists) the historians, belonged, almost without an exception, to the ancient religion. It still kept possession of the most illustrious schools, especially those of Athens and Alexandria ; the majority of the Roman senate were still attached to it ; and in the breasts of the common people, particularly the rural population, it maintained its power for several centuries, branded, however, with the name of magic, a name eagerly given to a fallen religion which persecution forces into concealment. If the pagans wished that their dishonoured faith should be avenged on their fellow citizens and on themselves, they might enjoy this melancholy consolation in the thirty-two years, the events of which we are now about to retrace—the years which elapsed from the death of Julian to that of the great Theodosius (A. D. 363—395). This period, though it produced some distinguished leaders, was marked by dreadful and atrocious calamities. The talents, even the genius, of some emperors no longer sufficed to save the civilised world from the attacks of its barbarian foes, or from the more formidable peril of its own internal corruption. The vigour displayed by Valentinian in defence of the West, from the year 364 to 375 ; the imprudence of Valens, who laid open the interior of the empire to the Gothic nations, and the disasters which resulted from this, from 375 to 379 ; lastly, the policy of Theodosius

the Great, who, from 379 to 395, succeeded in disarming enemies whom he could not subdue, will successively form the subject of our reflections.

Less than eight months after his elevation to the throne, on the 17th of February, 364, Jovian died in a small town of Galatia. After the expiration of ten days, the army which he was leading home from Persia, at a solemn assembly held at Nice, in Bithynia, chose as his successor the son of a captain from a little village of Pannonia, the count Valentinian, whom his valour and bodily prowess had raised to one of the highest posts of the army. Valentinian, who had distinguished himself in Gaul, knew no language but Latin, no science but that of war. Having given proofs of independence of character in a subordinate condition, he thought to preserve a certain consistency of virtue by showing himself firm, inflexible, prompt, often cruel, in his judgments. He forgot that to resist power, demands courage; to crush weakness, needs only brutality. Spite of his savage rudeness, and the furious violence of his temper, the Roman empire found in him an able chief at the moment of its greatest need. Unhappily, the extent of the empire required, at least, two rulers. The army felt this, and demanded a second. "If you think of your country," said a brave officer to him, "choose a colleague from among her children; if you think only of yourself, you have a brother." Valentinian showed no irritation, but he chose his brother. Valens, with whom he shared his power, had the weak, timid, and cruel character which ordinarily distinguishes cowards. Valentinian, born in the West, speaking only the language, and attached to the manners and the climate of the West, reserved the government of it to himself. He ceded to his brother a part of Illyricum on the Danube, and the whole of the East. He established universal toleration by law, and took no part in the sectarian controversies which divided Christendom. Valens adopted the Arian faith, and persecuted the orthodox party.

The finances of the empire demanded a reform, which

neither of the emperors was in a condition to undertake. They wanted money, and they were ignorant where to seek the long exhausted sources of public wealth. Three direct taxes, equally ruinous, pressed upon the citizens ; the indictions, or territorial impost, calculated on the third of the income, and often doubled or tripled by superindictions, which the necessities of the provinces compelled the government to exact ; the capitation or poll tax, which sometimes amounted to a sum equivalent to twelve pounds sterling per head, and the heavy gratuitous labours imposed for the service of the land, and the transport of the commodities belonging to the revenue. These taxes had so utterly ruined the landholders, that in all parts of the country they abandoned estates, which no longer produced enough to pay the charges upon them. Vast provinces in the interior were deserted ; enlistments daily became more scanty and difficult ; the magistrates of the *curiæ* or municipalities, who were responsible both for the contributions and the levies of their respective towns, sought by a thousand subterfuges to escape the perilous honour of the magistrature. Some were seen taking refuge on the estates of some powerful senator, concealing themselves among his slaves, voluntarily submitting to the brand of infamy, in the hope that it would disqualify them from charges so ruinous. In vain ; they were forcibly dragged from their ignominious retreat, and reinvested with the marks of these dreaded dignities. Then, when any disorder excited the anger of Valentinian, he called them to account for it with transports of fury. On one occasion he ordered the lictors to bring him the heads of three magistrates of each town throughout a whole province. “ Will your clemency be pleased to order,” said the prefect Florentius, “ what we are to do in the case of towns which do not contain three magistrates ? ” The order was revoked. Though the emperor was a Christian, the people and the monks almost always inscribed in the list of martyrs those who fell victims to his brutal rage. During the whole of the

reigns of Constantine and his sons, the internal suffering of the empire had continued to increase. The mitigation of it effected by Julian was but temporary, and confined to a small number of provinces ; and his fatal expedition into Syria, which destroyed the finest army of the empire, increased the necessities of the government, and forced it to have recourse to still more disastrous expedients.

During the twelve years that Valentinian reigned over the West (A.D. 364—376), he redeemed his cruelties by several brilliant victories. He drove the Allemans out of Gaul and Rhætia, which they had invaded and laid waste, and pursued them into their own country, where he again conquered them. He then excited a war between them and the Burgundians, whom he persuaded to come as far as the banks of the Rhine to avenge a quarrel they had had with the Allemans concerning certain salt-works. Valentinian had undertaken the defence of Gaul in person, and generally resided at Treves, then the capital of that vast prefecture ; but at the time he was thus occupied, invasions not less formidable had devastated the other provinces of the West. The different tribes of Scots, forefathers of those Highlanders who were still so nearly in a savage state, when they invaded England in 1745, marched across the whole extent of Britain. Their path was marked by cruelties so atrocious, that it was believed at the time, and recorded by St. Jerome, that they lived on human flesh. London, even, was threatened by them, and the whole island, which, like all the other provinces of the empire, had lost every spark of military virtue, was incapable of opposing any resistance to them. Theodosius, a Spanish officer, and father of the great man of the same name who was afterwards associated in the empire, was charged by Valentinian with the defence of Britain. He forced the Scots to fall back (A.D. 367—370), but without having been able to bring them to an engagement. Scarcely had he delivered the Britons from these savage enemies, when Va-

lentinian entrusted to him the conduct of a war of equal difficulty against the Moors, whom intolerable oppression had driven to revolt, and who had found in Firmus, one of their native princes, tributary to Rome, an able and experienced leader. Theodosius pursued him with undaunted ardour and perseverance across the burning plains of Gætulia and the gorges of Mount Atlas. He gave him no rest ; and after defeating him in several battles, left him no other resource than a voluntary death. But Theodosius experienced the fate frequently reserved to eminent men under the tyrants of Rome. He wrote to the emperor that the revolt of the Moors was the work of the prefect Romanus, whose insupportable tyranny had reduced them to a state of desperation. He urged his recall, as the only means of saving the province. To complain, on whatever ground or whatever provocation, is to call in question the virtue or the wisdom of the despot. The emperor resented this offence. He caused his virtuous general to be beheaded at Carthage, and rewarded Romanus for his crimes.

At this period Valens reigned over the Greeks, whose language he did not understand (A. D. 364—378). His eastern frontier was menaced by the Persians, his northern by the Goths. It is true, that, observing with still greater timidity than real weakness, the shameful peace which Jovian had concluded with the former, he endeavoured to disarm Sapor, to whom the strong places on the frontier had been given up. But one of the disgraceful conditions of a treaty imposed on the Romans, was the desertion of the king of Armenia, and his neighbour the king of Iberia. Both were attacked by Sapor. The former, deceived by an artful negotiation, was treacherously invited to a feast, where he was loaded with chains and afterwards massacred. The latter was compelled to flee. Armenia and Iberia became subject to Persia ; but as the people of both these countries were Christian, they remained faithful to the interests of Rome, though conquered by her enemy.



A son of the king of Armenia, named Para, found his father's subjects ever ready to take up arms in his favour: the frequent revolts of the Armenians kept the Persian frontier in a state of insecurity and disquiet, and occupied the arms of Sapor in his old age. Para would, indeed, eventually have triumphed, and have established the independence of Armenia, had not the emperor Valens, by a policy wholly inexplicable, caused him to be assassinated, in the year 374, in the midst of an entertainment which he gave his generals.

The dominion of the Goths extended along the shores of the Danube and the Black Sea, and thirty years had elapsed since they had made any incursion into the Roman territory. But during that period they had gone on increasing in greatness and in power. The aged Hermanric, the most illustrious of the Amalian race, reigned over the whole nation; his power had extended from the Ostrogoths to the Visigoths, then to the Gepidæ. He had pushed his conquests to the shores of the Baltic; the Esthonians and the Russians, or Roxolani, were among his subjects, as well as the Hetes of the plains of Poland, and the Heruli of the Palus Mæotides. At the beginning of the reign of Valens, an attempt of Procopius, a distant relation of Julian, to get himself crowned at Constantinople, had drawn the Goths, his allies, to the south of the Danube. They were, however, repulsed in three campaigns (A. D. 367—369), and peace was re-established on that frontier. Spite of the formidable neighbourhood of the Goths and the Persians—spite of the cowardice and the incapacity of Valens—the East had remained at peace, protected by the mere name of Valentinian, whose military talents, promptitude, and severity were known to all the barbarian tribes. But the career of this remarkable man, so dreaded by his enemies and by his subjects, had now reached its term. He was carrying war into Pannonia against the Quadi, and having granted an audience to the ambassadors of that nation, who came as suppliants to demand peace, gave way to



so violent a fit of rage against them, that he burst a blood-vessel in his chest, and died in their presence, stifled by his own blood, which gushed in torrents from his mouth (Nov. 17. 375). His two sons, — Gratian, who was scarcely come to manhood, and Valentinian, still a child, — shared the West between them; while Valens, who had been thought incompetent to fill the second place, now remained in possession of the supreme power in the East.

Never, however, was the empire in greater need of an able and vigorous head. The entire nation of the Huns, abandoning to the Sienpi its ancient pastures bordering on China, had traversed the whole north of Asia by a march of 1300 leagues. This immense horde, swelled by all the conquered nations whom it carried along in its passage, bore down on the plains of the Alans, and defeated them on the banks of the Tanais in a great battle. It received into its body a part of the vanquished tribe, accompanied by which it continued to advance towards the West; while other Alans, too haughty to renounce their independence, had retreated, some into Germany, whence we shall see them afterwards pass into Gaul; others into the Caucasian mountains, where they preserve their name to this day.

The Goths who bordered on the Alans had fertilised by their labours the rich plains which lie to the north of the Danube and of the Black Sea. More civilised than any of the kindred Germanic tribes, they began to make rapid progress in the social sciences. They addicted themselves to agriculture; they cultivated the arts; they improved their language; they collected the traditions, sung, or perhaps inscribed, in the Runic character, which preserved the memory of their migrations, and of the exploits of their fathers; they kept up an advantageous intercourse with Greece, by means of which Christianity began to find its way among them; and, while they had gained more extensive knowledge, and more humane manners, they had lost nothing of their love of liberty, nor of their bravery.

This comparatively fortunate state of things was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of the Huns,—the unlooked-for arrival of that savage nation, which, from the moment it crossed the Borysthenes, or the Dnieper, began to burn their villages and their crops; to massacre, without pity, men, women, and children; to devastate and destroy whatever came within the reach of a Scythian horseman. Their language was understood by none; the Goths even doubted whether its shrill and dissonant sounds were those of any human speech. Their name had never been heard in Europe. Northern superstition soon accounted for the sudden apparition of these armed myriads, by supposing them the offspring of infernal spirits,—the only fit consorts, they said, of women, the outcasts of Europe, who had been driven into deserts for the practice of arts of magic.

The hideous aspect of the Huns gave colour to this devilish genealogy. “They put to flight,” says Jordanes, the Gothic historian, “by the terror inspired by their countenance, those whom their bravery would never have subdued. The livid colour of their skin had something frightful in it; it was not a face, but a formless mass of flesh, in which two black and sinister spots filled the place of eyes. Their cruelty wreaked itself upon their own children, whose cheeks they lacerated with iron before they had tasted their mothers’ milk. For this reason no down shaded their chin in youth, no beard gave dignity to their old age.” Their bodies seemed no less disgusting than their faces. “Their aspect was not that of men,” says Ammianus Marcellinus, “but of beasts standing on their hind legs, as it were in mockery of our species.”

The great Hermanric, whose kingdom extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea, would not have abandoned his sceptre to the Huns without a struggle, but at this very time he was murdered by a domestic enemy. The nations he had subjugated prepared on every side for rebellion. The Ostrogoths, after a vain resistance, broke their alliance with the Visigoths; while the latter, like

an affrighted flock of sheep, trooping together from all parts of their vast territory to the right bank of the Danube, refused to combat those superhuman beings by whom they were pursued. They stretched out their supplicating hands to the Romans on the other bank, entreating that they might be permitted to seek a refuge from the butchery which threatened them, in those wilds of Mœsia and Thrace which were almost valueless to the empire. They promised to bring them into a state of cultivation, to pay the taxes on the land, and to defend it with their arms. Valens, who for five years had fixed his residence at Antioch, learned with surprise that an empire equal to his own in extent, superior in valour, and so long the object of his terror, had suddenly crumbled into dust, and that his most formidable enemies were now imploring to become his subjects.

Humanity, enjoined him to grant the petition of the Goths ; perhaps even policy dictated it ; but baser motives determined the emperor, his counsellors, and the subalterns charged with the execution of his orders. Their sordid cupidity soon rendered odious the hospitality they offered to the Goths. The emperor had imposed two conditions on their reception ; the one, that they should lay down their arms, the other, that they should give up their children as hostages. The officers charged with the duty of receiving the arms, suffered themselves to be seduced by bribes into a connivance at the non-execution of this order. Yet, when the transport, not of an army, but of a nation, was accomplished, when 200,000 warriors, exclusive of women and children, had crossed the Danube, which, on the north of Mœsia, is above a mile in width ; the imperial officers tried to profit by a famine, real or feigned, to strip those of gold whom they had left in possession of steel. All the necessaries of life were sold to them at the prices of an exorbitant monopoly. Never was avarice more blind ; never did besotted government more effectually prepare its own ruin.

So long as the most vile and unwholesome food could be purchased at the price of money, of effects, of slaves, the Goths consented to strip themselves. The fear of endangering their hostages sustained their endurance to its utmost term : they even sold the children who were left them, and whom they could no longer feed, to buy sustenance for a few days. But when the distrust of the Romans, increasing with their injuries, led them to take measures for dispersing the Goths over the whole empire, and troops were assembled to crush them if they offered resistance, this very attempt to sever, did but strengthen the ties that united them. Their chief, Fritigern, formerly designated by the title of Judge, began to take upon himself the character and functions of sovereign ; and a violent quarrel having broken out at Marcianople, the capital of Lower Mœsia, between the oppressed and the oppressors, Lupicinus, the general of Valens, was defeated, his army put to flight, and the oppressed guests of the Romans found themselves masters of Mœsia.

The first success secured nearly all that were to follow. At the news of it, the Ostrogoths, who had maintained their independence against the Huns, passed the Danube arms in hand, and joined the Visigoths. Long before the invasion of the Huns, a great number of young Goths had entered the Roman service as an advantageous and honourable career : they now raised the standard of revolt, and went over to their countrymen. But the most dangerous of the auxiliaries of the barbarian army were the slaves, who fled in all directions from their inhuman masters, especially those who had been condemned to labour in the mines of Mount Rhodope: they craved vengeance at the hands of the stranger, and, in return, communicated their knowledge of the country, and the secret intelligence they had means of procuring. Notwithstanding these advantages, war was carried on for two years with various success. On the side of Valens, Roman discipline, and the possession of arsenals, magazines, and fortresses, counterbalanced the

bravery of the Goths and the talents of Fritigern. But the pride of the emperor of the East could only be satisfied by a victory gained under his auspices. He marched in person against the Goths with a most brilliant army ; he would not wait for Gratian, who was advancing from the West to his assistance. His defeat at Adrianople, on the 9th of August, 378, after which he perished in the flames of a hovel in which he had sought refuge, left the empire without a defender.

The forces of the East were nearly annihilated at the terrible battle of Adrianople : more than 60,000 Roman soldiers perished in the fight or in the pursuit ; and the time was long past when such a loss could have been easily repaired by fresh levies. Nevertheless, even after this frightful massacre, the walls of Adrianople still opposed an unconquerable resistance to the barbarians. Valour may supply the place of military science in the open field, but civilised nations recover all the advantages of the art of war in the attack or defence of fortified towns. Fritigern quitted Adrianople, declaring that he made no war upon stones. But, with the exception of a few great cities, the Romans had neglected the fortifications of the provincial towns : to defend them, it would have been necessary to arm the citizens, to train them to war, to place within their reach means of resistance which they might have turned to the purposes of revolt or of civil war. Empires are nodding to their fall, when their rulers are more in dread of subjects than of external foes : this dread is almost invariably the proof of injuries, by which they have earned the hatred and vengeance of the people. The Goths, leaving Adrianople in their rear, advanced, ravaging all around them, to the foot of the walls of Constantinople ; and, after some unimportant skirmishes, returned westward through Macedonia, Epirus, and Dalmatia. From the Danube to the Adriatic, their passage was marked by conflagration and blood.

Whilst the European provinces of the Greck empire sunk under these calamities, the Asiatic provinces took

a horrible vengeance on the authors of them. We have said, that before the Goths were permitted to pass the Danube, they were compelled to give up their children as hostages ; that those whom their parents had been able to retain at that time, were afterwards sold for any sum that would purchase present sustenance for their famishing fathers ; that the peril of these children had long been the only tie that had withheld the army of the barbarians, who, even in selling them, had sought to save them from starvation. When their patience was at length utterly exhausted,—when the whole East resounded with the noise of their exploits,—these devoted children, with a daring far beyond their strength, unarmed as they were, and dispersed through all the towns of Asia, celebrated the triumph of their fathers ; they sang the songs of their country ; they would speak no language but their native tongue ; they exulted in the hope that they should soon share in these victories,—soon join the ranks of their countrymen. The inhabitants of the East, alarmed or incensed, saw, or pretended to see, in these imprudent demonstrations of youthful feeling, threatenings of a general revolt. Julius, commander-in-chief of the forces of the East, denounced them to the senate of Constantinople, as conspirators, and asked for orders ; for the empire had remained, since the death of Valens, without a head. The senate imprudently recurred to the arbitrary constitutions of that republic, the tutelary provisions of which they completely disregarded. It authorised Julius to take care that the republic received no detriment (*caveant consules ne quid, &c.*). The young Goths were allured, by treacherous promises, into the capital of each province. Scarcely were they assembled in the Forum, when all the avenues were invested by guards, bowmen appeared on the roofs of all the houses, and, at a given signal, on the same day and hour throughout all the cities of Asia, the whole body of this noble and ardent youth was assailed, unarmed and defenceless, by a shower of darts, and then slaughtered without mercy.



An atrocious act of cruelty is almost always a sign of cowardice, not of courage. The Orientals, who, in thus massacring thousands of young men, seemed resolved to destroy all possibility of a reconciliation with their fathers, never dared to meet those fathers in the field. The same terror with which the Huns had so lately inspired the Goths, they in their turn struck into the Greeks. Nay, the hostile races, Scythian and Teutonic, had united for the destruction of the Roman empire. The Huns, who had penetrated into Dacia, had stopped there, and had pitched their tents. The captain who had led them thither was dead; civil discords broke out in their hordes; and it was no longer in pursuit of a general war, but in the quest of private adventures, that several divisions of Huns and Alans crossed the Danube, contracted an alliance with Fritigern, and seconded the steady and thoughtful valour of the Goths by a numerous and active cavalry.

No general in the East attempted to take advantage of the anarchy in favour of his own ambition; no army offered the purple to its chief; all dreaded the responsibility of command at so tremendous a crisis. All eyes were turned on the court of Treves, the only point whence help was hoped for. But Gratian, eldest son of Valentinian, and emperor of the West, was only nineteen. He had, indeed, even at that early age, acquired some renown in arms, especially through the counsels of an ambitious Frank named Merobaudes, one of the kings of that warlike people, who had not scorned the title of count of the domestics of the imperial court, and who, uniting his influence over his countrymen to the arts and intrigues of a courtier, had become the arbiter of the West. Gratian marched upon Illyricum with his army, when he learned the event of the battle of Adrianople, and the death of Valens, who had been so eager to secure the undivided honours of victory, that he would not wait for his arrival. Incapable of confronting such a tempest, he retreated to Sirmium. The news of an invasion of the Allemans into Gaul recalled

him to the defence of his own territory. Danger started up on every hand at once. The empire stood in need of a new chief, and one of approved valour. Gratian had the singular generosity to choose from among his enemies, and from a sense of merit alone. Theodosius the Spaniard, his father's general, who had successively vanquished the Scots, and afterwards the Moors, and who had been unjustly condemned to the scaffold at the beginning of Gratian's reign, had left a son thirty-three years of age, who bore his name. The younger Theodosius had distinguished himself in the command he held in Mœsia, but was living in retirement and disgrace on his estates in Spain, when, with the confidence of a noble mind, Gratian chose him out, presented him to the army on the 19th of January, 379, and declared him his colleague, and emperor of the East.

The task imposed on the great Theodosius was infinitely difficult. The abandonment of the Danube had opened the entrance of the empire not only to the Goths, but to all the tribes of Germany and Scythia. They overran the immense Illyrian peninsula from one end to the other, unresisted, yet with unabated fury. The blood of the young Goths which had been shed in Asia was daily avenged with interest over all that remained of Mœsian, Thrasian, Dalmatian, or Grecian race. It was more particularly during these four years of extermination that the Goths acquired the fatal celebrity attached to their name, which is still that of the destroyers of civilisation. Theodosius began by strengthening the fortified cities, recruiting the garrisons, and exercising his soldiers in small engagements whenever he felt assured of success : he then waited to take advantage of circumstances ; he sought to divide his enemies by intrigue, and, above all, strenuously disavowed the rapacity of the ministers of Valens, or the cruelty of Julius ; he took every occasion of declaring his attachment and esteem for the Gothic people, and at length succeeded in persuading them that his friendship was sincere : happy in the peaceful state of his



Asian frontier ; happy that the aged Sapor II., or his effeminate successor Artaxerxes II., did not attempt an attack on the Roman empire, which would infallibly have succeeded.

The very victories of the Goths, their pride, their intemperance, at length impaired their energy. Frigern, who, in the most difficult moments, had led them on with so much ability, was dead : the jealousies of independent tribes were rekindled ; they refused to obey a common chief. The people of Scythia, the Huns, the Alans, who had shared in the plunder of the empire, now separated themselves from the Germans. They contemned the Goths for their flight ; and the Goths felt their antipathy to them to be strong as ever. Theodosius dexterously profited by these seeds of discord ; he drew successively into his service several leaders of the malecontents ; he soon convinced the barbarians that they would find more riches, more enjoyment, in the pay of the emperor, than they could conquer by the sword in provinces laid waste by the fury of merciless invaders. He was careful to afford so much countenance and support to those whom he had received under his banners, that the example became contagious. It was by a series of treaties with as many independent chieftains, that the nation was at length induced to lay down its arms : the last of these treaties was concluded on the 30th of October, 382. It restored peace to the Eastern empire, six years after the Goths crossed the Danube.

This formidable nation was thus finally established within the boundary of the empire of the East. The vast regions they had ravaged were abandoned to them, if not in absolute sovereignty, at least on terms little at variance with their independence. The Goths settled in the bosom of the empire had no kings ; their hereditary chiefs were consulted under the name of judges, but their power was unchanged ; they were still the military commanders, the presidents of popular assemblies, who administered justice and government. The

Goths gave a vague sort of recognition to the sovereignty of the Roman emperor ; but they submitted neither to his laws, his magistrates, nor his taxes. They engaged to maintain 40,000 men for the service of Theodosius ; but they were to remain a distinct army, to obey no leaders but such as they chose themselves, to be in no way confounded with the Roman soldiery, and to be distinguished by the title of federated troops. The labours of agriculture, which they had been forced to abandon in Dacia, they now resumed in Mœsia and all the country lying on the right of the Danube. They portioned out waste lands. By their intermixture with the original inhabitants, they acquired new branches of knowledge, and followed up the progress they had already made in civilisation. It was, probably, at this period that their apostle, bishop Ulphilas, who had translated the Gospels into their tongue, invented the Mœso-Gothic character, which bears the name of their new abode. Occupying the border country between the two empires and the two languages, they borrowed something from each, even in their alphabet. At the same time that they were virtual masters of these provinces; their leaders offered themselves as candidates for all posts and employments at the court of Constantinople. From these they passed to the command of provinces ; and the great Theodosius found himself compelled to decorate several Goths with the consulate ; for the two emperors yearly agreed on the election of those ancient magistrates of the republic, now without functions, and serving little other purpose than to give their names to the year in the consular fasti.

Thus, then, the empire still subsisted, but the barbarians possessed both the force of arms and the authority of magistratures ; already were they established as a compact national body within her frontiers. Theodosius conferred the consulate on Goths, and his colleague Gratian on Franks — among others on Mero-baudes, chief of that warlike nation. The Frankish people had contracted a useful alliance with the empire.

It supplied nearly the whole of the armies of the West, and exclusively guided the counsels of the court. About this epoch, however, the young Gratian, who had early obtained a brilliant reputation, having delivered Gaul from a formidable invasion by a decisive victory obtained over the Allemans, near Colmar, in the month of May, 378, began to lose his popularity and the support of his Germanic allies. Passionately addicted to the chase, he was struck with admiration at the superior skill of the Scythian archers. He took into his pay a considerable body of those Alans who had been obliged to leave the Huns on the banks of the Wolga. He established them on the Seine, made them the companions of his sports and exercises, formed them into a body guard, and even wore their dress. The Romans, and the Franks their confederates, equally regarded this preference as an insult. The legions of Britain revolted, and placed the purple on the senator Maximus: those of Gaul deserted Gratian; and the young emperor, constrained to flee, was killed at Lyons on the 25th of August, 383. Theodosius, at that time occupied by a new aggression of the Ostrogoths and the Gruthungians, whom he defeated, and Valentinian II., who, while yet a child, wielded the sceptre of Italy and Africa, were both compelled to acknowledge Maximus as the colleague whom the will of the soldiery had given them. (A. D. 383—387.)

The history of the reign of Theodosius is very imperfectly known. Coteremporary historians, either of the Eastern or Western empire, are wholly wanting to that period. Nevertheless, the title of Great has been handed down to bespeak the admiration of posterity. So far as we can judge, he seems to have merited this title, in the first place, by his military talents, always the surest claim to vulgar distinction; and secondly, by a considerable degree of prudence in the difficult government of a tottering state; by a generosity which broke forth with singular lustre on some occasions, and by domestic virtues and affections, purity of manners,

and gentleness in his social relations,—qualities always rare in an exalted station, rarest of all on the throne of Constantinople. Yet it was neither his victories, nor his talents, nor his virtues, that procured him the title of Great, or the zeal with which his name has been celebrated from age to age : it was, above all, the protection he afforded to the orthodox church,—a protection which extended its triumph over heretics and pagans, but which, in accordance with the spirit of his age, was stained with the most odious intolerance.

When Theodosius ascended the throne of the East, Arianism, favoured by Valens, was the dominant faith, especially at Constantinople. The patriarch was Arian ; the majority of the clergy, and the monks, and the great mass<sup>‡</sup> of the people, were attached to that form of Christianity. Theodosius, trained in the opposite creed, declined engaging in the subtle disputes of the Greeks, or examining for himself the different confessions of faith, or the evidence by which they were supported. He deemed it more prudent to make choice of two living symbols, — two prelates, whom, in his first religious edict (A. D. 380), he declared to be “ the treasures of the true doctrine.” Their names were Damasus, bishop of Rome, and Peter, bishop of Alexandria. Those whose faith was in conformity with that of these two luminaries of the church, were declared the sole orthodox, the sole Catholic, and were to remain sole possessors of all the churches, of all the ecclesiastical foundations, and of all property bequeathed to the clergy. All others were rejected as outcasts from the bosom of the church ; sentenced, in fifteen successive edicts, to punishments continually increasing in severity ; deprived of the exercise of their civil rights,—among others, of that of bequest ; they were driven from their houses, then into exile ; and lastly, those guilty of certain heresies, as, for instance, the Quartodecimans, who celebrated Easter on the same days as it is observed by the Jews, instead of celebrating it on a Sunday, as Christians do, were sentenced to death. At

the same time a new magistrature, — that of inquisitors of the faith, — was instituted by Theodosius, to act at once as spies, and as judges of the secret opinions of his subjects.

A sort of instinct of justice withheld these magistrates, for the present, from exacting from pagans as rigid an account of their thoughts as from heretics ; they seemed to recognise the rights of long possession, the sacredness of time-hallowed opinions, and the potency of habit. Many of the most distinguished senators, orators, and philosophers of Rome still publicly professed the antique faith. Theodosius did not venture to attach any punishment to the manifestation of their sentiments ; he contented himself with prohibiting the most essential act of the primitive religion : he declared a sacrifice to the gods to be an act of high treason, and in consequence, punishable with death.

That church, which had so lately escaped from the persecutions of the pagans, now demanded, with a deplorable zeal, to be permitted to persecute in its turn. Three men who lived in the reign of Theodosius, rise distinguished from the ranks of the clergy, and surpass all their rivals in talent, force of character, and even in virtue ; — St. Gregory Nazianzen, for a time patriarch of Constantinople ; St. Ambrose, archbishop of Milan ; and St. Martin, archbishop of Tours. All three powerfully contributed to fan the flame of persecution. St. Gregory, installed by soldiers in the cathedral of Constantinople, in defiance of the opposition of the whole flock intrusted to his care, lent his aid to the expulsion of the Arian clergy, having first stripped them of their functions, and substituted others in their places ; and when he had himself abdicated that exalted station, he continued to exhort his successor, Nectarius, not to relax in zeal against the heretics. At Milan, St. Ambrose would not extend the benefit of toleration so much as to his own emperor, Valentinian II., who had been educated by his mother, Justina, regent of Italy and of Africa, in Arian opinions.

Ambrose refused the emperor, his mother, and the Gothic soldiers who formed his body guard, the use of a single church; he assembled the people in the Basilica (A. D. 386), to defend it against the soldiers. To this popular resistance the celebrated Ambrosian chant owes its origin. The ceaseless chanting of the psalms, which intermitted not day or night, was the means of preserving the wakeful watch of the multitude who guarded the holy places. Lastly, St. Martin, who may be regarded as the great apostle of the Gauls, placed himself at the head of a troop of armed people, and undertook the destruction of the idols and their sanctuaries throughout his neighbourhood (A. D. 389). The peasants sometimes attempted resistance, but they soon paid for their temerity with their lives. On this occasion a judicial investigation was set on foot; but the saints declared, and the judges admitted, that the blood of the pagans had not been shed by the armed multitude led on by St. Martin to the attack of their temples, but that devils and angels had combated in these places, and the idolaters had merely shared the fate of the infernal spirits with whom they were leagued.

The influence which religion exercised over Theodosius was more worthy of her, and more consolatory to those who watch the effects of her power over men, in the penance enjoined upon him by St. Ambrose in expiation of a heavy crime. Theodosius was subject to the most violent transports of rage; and that mildness for which he is extolled, vanished before the fits of anger which troubled his reason. Twice he was thus exasperated by the sedition of two of the largest cities of his states. Antioch, capital of Syria and of the whole Levant, one of the most flourishing towns of the empire, revolted, on the 26th of February, 387, against an edict enforcing fresh taxes, and dragged the statues of the emperor in the mud. The city was soon reduced to submission, but four and twenty hours elapsed before it was known what punishment was decreed by

Theodosius, who was then at Constantinople. His first orders were cruel : a great number of senators were to be beheaded, many wealthy citizens to be stripped of their property, all the distributions of bread were to be stopped, and the capital of the East to surrender all its privileges, and be reduced to the rank of a village. The magistrates, however, were slow in the execution of these orders, they even interceded with Theodosius, who, after considerable delay, granted full pardon. The fate of Thessalonica was more cruel. That powerful city, capital of the whole Illyrian province, rose in insurrection, on an occasion so insignificant as certain games of the Circus, to obtain the liberty of a skilful charioteer who had been imprisoned (A. D. 390). Botheric, commandant of the city, was killed, together with several of his officers, while endeavouring to suppress the sedition, and his body treated with the greatest indignity by the populace. Theodosius, who was then at Milan with Valentinian II., immediately gave orders that 7000, or, according to some, 15,000, Thessalonian heads should fall as a punishment for this rebellion. The inhabitants were invited to the Circus, as if to the celebration of new games : while they were waiting for the signal for the departure of the chariots, a body of soldiers rushed in upon them, and slaughtered without distinction of innocence or guilt, of sex or age. This horrible butchery lasted three hours, when the tribute of heads exacted by the emperor was collected.

When the news of this massacre reached St. Ambrose at Milan, he manifested the liveliest grief. He wrote to Theodosius, on no account to show himself in a church, stained as he was with innocent blood. Theodosius, having disregarded this interdict, was stopped by St. Ambrose, at the head of his clergy, on the portico of the temple which he was about to enter. "David, the king who was well pleasing to God," said the emperor, "was much more guilty than I, for he joined adultery to murder."—"If you have imitated David in his guilt, imitate him in his repentance,"



replied the archbishop. His courageous remonstrances intimidated the monarch, who submitted to the chastisement of the church. He laid aside the imperial ornaments, and confessed his sins with the deepest sorrow and humiliation in the presence of the people ; nor was it till after eight months of penitence that he was restored to the bosom of the church.

The authority of Theodosius did not extend over the West. His residence at Milan was only the consequence of the succour he had afforded to his colleague, Valentinian II., who had been attacked by surprise and driven out of Italy, in 387, by Maximus, emperor of Gaul. Maximus was defeated on the banks of the Save, in June, 388, and beheaded by order of Theodosius, who at the same time ceded to Valentinian, who had become his brother-in-law, Gaul, and all the remaining countries of the West. The new reign of this young prince was not of long duration. He removed the seat of his court to Vienne on the Rhone, where he was assassinated, on the 15th of May, 392, by order of Arbogastes, general of the Franks, whose authority had long predominated over that of his master. Two years elapsed before Theodosius was able to return to the West, to avenge his colleague. On the 6th of September, 394, at the foot of the Julian Alps, he vanquished Eugenius the grammarian, whom Arbogastes had set up as a phantom emperor. After this victory he was acknowledged, without a rival or a colleague, throughout the Roman empire. But already his life was drawing to its close. He was attacked by a dropsy, which appears to have been the consequence of his intemperance, and survived his victory but four months. He died at Milan on the 17th of January, 395, aged fifty years, leaving the Roman world exposed to a host of calamities, which his talents and his courage had hardly sufficed to avert or to suspend.



## CHAP. VI.

DEGRADATION OF THE ROMAN SOLDIERY. — DESTRUCTION OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES. — RECKLESSNESS AND CORRUPTION OF THE HIGHER AND THE LOWER. — MASSACRE OF THESSALONICA. — ARCADIUS AND HONORIUS, SONS OF THEODOSIUS; THEIR IMBECILITY. — STILICHO; HIS GREAT QUALITIES. — STATE OF THE WEST UNDER ARCADIUS. — INVASION OF GREECE, BY ALARIC KING OF THE VISIGOTHS. — ITALY INVADED BY ALARIC; DEFENDED BY STILICHO. — DEFEAT OF ALARIC. — COWARDICE OF HONORIUS. — GREAT AND FINAL INVASION OF THE ALLIED BARBARIANS. — CAUSES OF THE SIMULTANEOUS MOVEMENT AMONG THE GERMANIC NATIONS. — THEY CROSS THE RHINE, AND RAVAGE GAUL. — INVASION OF SPAIN BY THE SUEVI, VANDALS, AND ALANS. — CONDUCT OF HONORIUS TO STILICHO. — MASSACRE OF THE BARBARIAN HOSTAGES. — SECOND WAR WITH ALARIC. — ROME TAKEN AND PILLAGED BY ALARIC. — HIS DEATH. — PEACE WITH THE VISIGOTHS. — CESSION OF AQUITAINE. — MARRIAGE OF ALARIC'S SUCCESSOR, ADOLF, WITH PLACIDIA, A SISTER OF THE EMPEROR. — A. D. 395—423.

THE great Theodosius, who had frequently been seen to pass from the energetic activity of a warrior to the indolence and luxurious indulgence of a Sybarite, is accused, by Zosimus, of having corrupted the manners of his age, and precipitated the fall of the empire. Zosimus constantly writes under the influence of a feeling of personal hostility; and, certainly, when we recollect who and what were the predecessors of Theodosius,—what the Romans were under Tiberius and Nero, what they were under Gallienus,—it does appear that there was very little to corrupt; and that Theodosius, who was faithful to his domestic obligations, a good father and a good husband, even during those intervals of luxurious ease with which he is reproached, can scarcely be regarded as a corrupter. Nevertheless, it is incontestable that, during his reign, a last step was made towards that utter degradation of mind, that prostration of spirit,

which manifested itself during the shameful reign of his two sons, and which shook the colossus of the Roman empire to its base. Then it was, that soldiers, who did not blush to call themselves Romans, laid down their arms in the field; then it was, that that awful infantry, which had been used to fight foot to foot, and to rush, armed with its terrible short sword, on the ranks it had broken with its hurled spear, was transformed into a troop of timid bowmen, destitute of all defensive armour, and compelled to flee from every near attack of the enemy. Then it was, that, in the cities, the citizens showed the most invincible repugnance to undertaking any public functions, which they avoided by the most disgraceful expedients. Then it was, that magistrates and senators began to pay their court to barbarian kings; to transport the arts of intrigue and of adroit flattery into the camps of Gothic or Frankic warriors, whom they regarded as their inferiors, but feared as the arbiters of their fortune. Then it was, above all, that the doctrine of the divine right of kings, of the criminality of all resistance on the part of the people, gained currency and credit in all ranks of society. The prelates, still full of gratitude for the support afforded them by Theodosius, taught that the power of God and of his ministers could alone set bounds to the power of kings. If, however, there is a great lesson to be gathered from the degrading revolutions of the empire, it is, that absolute power is fatal to him who wields, and to him who is subject to it. We have seen, we are about again to see, sovereigns, who, on the whole, do not deserve to be called wicked, afflict mankind with calamities surpassing those which have been most continually held up to our terror and aversion, as the offspring of the stormy passions of the people.

The utter corruption into which the Romans fell, during the fourth century, may also teach us this truth, — that adversity may be more fatal to the virtue of a nation than prosperity. Doubtless the period of the

irruption of the Allemans into Gaul, of the Caledonians into Britain, of the Moors into Africa, of the Sarmatians into Pannonia, and of the Goths into the whole province of Illyricum, was not that in which mankind was lulled to slumber in the lap of ease and pleasure. But one effect of the long duration of states, and of their extended power, is, to separate the inhabitants into two classes, between whom the distance is constantly widening, and gradually to destroy the intermediate class, togetherwith which all the social virtues are gradually uprooted and annihilated. From the time that this gulf is once opened between the two extremes of society, every successive revolution does but contribute to widen it: the progress of wealth had been favourable to the rich, the progress of distress favours them still more. The middle class had been unable to stand the competition with them during prosperity; in adverse times it is crushed under those calamities which only the very wealthy can stand against. The corruption of Rome had begun from the time of the republic, from the time that the middle class ceased to impress its own peculiar character on the whole nation: this corruption increased in proportion as the intermediate ranks disappeared; it was carried to its highest pitch when the whole empire consisted of men of enormous wealth, and populace.

It is, in fact, in the middle classes that the domestic virtues — economy, forethought, and the spirit of association, — mainly reside. It is in them that a certain degree of energy is incessantly called into operation, either as a means of rising, or of keeping the position already acquired. It is in them alone that the sentiment of social equality, on which all justice is based, can be kept alive. We must see our equals, live with them, meet them daily and hourly, encounter their interests and their passions, before we can get the habit of seeking our own advantage in the common weal alone. Grandeur isolates a man; vast opulence accustoms each individual to look upon himself as a distinct power. He feels that he can exist independently of his coun-

try ; that his elevation, or his fall, may be distinct ; and, ere long, the servile dependants, by whom a man who spends as much as a petty state is sure to be surrounded, succeed in persuading him that his pleasures, his pains, nay, his slightest caprices, are more important than the welfare of the thousands of families whose means of subsistence he engrosses.

The morality of a nation is preserved by associating its sentiments with all that is stable and permanent : it is destroyed by whatever tends to concentrate them on the present moment. So long as our recollections are dear to us, we shall take care that our hopes be worthy of them ; but a people who sacrifice the memory of their ancestors, or the welfare of their children, to the pleasures of a day, are but sojourners in a country, — they are not citizens. In the Roman empire, at the time of the great Theodosius, the only two remaining classes of society were equally ashamed of the past, equally afraid of the future, equally driven to drown all reflection in the present. At the bottom of the social scale, the populace, recently emerged from slavery, or ready to sink into it again, lived on the public distributions of provisions, or on a daily largess, beyond which they saw nothing. Without hope for the future, these men had nothing to lose but their lives ; and even these they were not permitted to ensure to themselves the power of defending. What remained for them, but to render themselves brutishly reckless of calamities they had no means of averting, and which, whenever they did come, would bring with them the final insensibility to all suffering ? At the other extremity of the scale, the senators were nurtured in the same indifference. Their possessions were almost invariably situated in remote provinces : he who learned that his harvests in Gaul had been burned, could still reckon on his granaries in Spain or Africa ; he who could not protect his Thracian fields from the ravages of the Goth, calculated that his Syrian olive grounds, at least, were safe from the incursions of the Persian. However severe

the losses they sustained, they scarcely ever amounted to ruin. They sometimes made him renounce marriage, (and, indeed, all the illustrious families of Rome were rapidly becoming extinct,) but never did they cause him to change his luxurious habits. The princes of Poland reposed on a security similar in nature, though on a far less extended scale, previous to the first partition of that unhappy country. The frightful ravages of the Zaporove Cosacks did not, indeed, ruin a descendant of the Jagellons ; but, with him, the security of fortune, united to the sentiment of patriotism, constituted a motive to dare every thing ; with the Roman senator, the same security, joined with selfishness, furnished merely a reason for not fearing the worst.

Improvvidence, and an unbridled appetite for pleasure, equally characterising the highest and the lowest class, are visible in every page of the Roman history of this period. We find a singular instance of it in the massacre of Thessalonica. Thessalonica was the capital of that great Illyrian prefecture, which, for years, had been subject to the horrible ravages of the Goths. Peace, it is true, had prevailed for eight years ; but the Gothic army and nation had remained masters of the country. Not four years, moreover, had elapsed since a fresh invasion, that of the Gruthungians, had struck terror into the whole province. It was under these circumstances that the people of this great city, which had never resisted either foreign conquest or domestic tyranny, revolted on account of a charioteer of the circus, and massacred the lieutenant, the officers, and soldiers, of their emperor. Nay, so universal was the rage for these spectacles, that, after having irritated a monarch whose terrible violence was well known, the crowd, childish as ferocious, rushed again, with blind unsuspecting eagerness, to the circus, and expected games when vengeance awaited it. The same tastes pervaded all the capitals ; the same fury for scenic games, the only one of all their public passions which the Romans retained to the last. Distributions of bread among the mob often exempted

them from all necessity for labour ; and, as they knew no other luxury, as they desired no other enjoyment, life, surrounded by public misery, was consumed in base and brutal pleasures.

The succession of the two sons of Theodosius, between whom the empire was divided (Jan. 17. 395), was not an event of a character to rouse the Roman world from its lethargy. Two children, who never became men, were heirs to the inheritance of a hero. Arcadius, whose portion was the East, was eighteen ; Honorius was only eleven. The former reigned thirteen years (A.D. 395—408), the latter twenty-eight (A.D. 395—423). It was never possible to discern the moment at which either arrived at the age of reason. But the imbecility of the elder was more immediately felt by the empire, because it was impossible not to pay some deference to his will and to his taste ; and the court, modelled on the nullity of its master, was, from his very accession, the scene of base intrigues, of feebleness, and of fraud ; whereas the infancy of the younger left the first place in the state for thirteen years in the occupation of him who was most worthy of it — the great Stilicho. (A.D. 395—408.)

Theodosius had intrusted his two sons to his two ablest ministers ; he had hoped they would second each other, and that the unity of the empire would be preserved under the sway of two old colleagues, guiding two minor brothers. On the contrary, the first feeling displayed by these ministers was one of jealousy ; the rancour of the weaker against the stronger mind sought an ally in popular prejudice. The East, whose language was Greek, was incited to distrust the West, where Latin prevailed. Difference of manners was blended with difference of language ; two nations were set in opposition to each other ; the unity of the Roman empire was broken ; and two empires, that of the East and that of the West, were taught to think that they had nothing in common.

Rufinus, an able Gallic jurisconsult, whom Theodo-

sius had raised to the rank of prefect of the East, was charged with the direction of the counsels of Arcadius and of the court of Constantinople. He had long been accused of avarice and cruelty ; his vices had, however, been controlled by the eye of the master : as soon as he felt himself without a superior, they broke forth without restraint. He already thought his fortune secured, beyond all chance of a reverse, by a marriage between his only daughter and his sovereign. Arcadius appeared to acquiesce. The day was fixed for the ceremony : the pompous nuptial train was on its way to the palace of the prefect, to fetch the new empress. But, in passing before the house of the beautiful Eudoxia, Arcadius suddenly stopped, declared that she was the bride he had chosen, and took her home to the palace, instead of the daughter of the prefect. It was, however, from no project originating in his own breast, from no passion which led him to disregard all other considerations, that the monarch of the East was induced thus to dupe his prime minister. He was but the tool of a court intrigue, conducted by the eunuch Eutropius : in this instance, as in every succeeding one of his reign, he yielded to the insinuations of his servants,—the only portion of his subjects whom he ever knew. Shortly after, Rufinus was murdered at his master's feet (Nov. 27. 395), by order of the Goth Gainas, who had led the legions of Theodosius back from the West ; and Arcadius, a stranger to all the duties and functions of empire, abandoned the reins of government to the vile favourites whom fraud or violence alternately raised to the domination of the palace.

Stilicho, a soldier of fortune, who is believed to have been the son of a Vandal, and who, under the reign of Theodosius, had already evinced great talents for war, was at the head of the army of the West at the moment of the emperor's death, and remained sole guardian of Honorius. Stilicho is the hero of Claudian, the last of the great poets of Rome : his poem is almost the only document of the history of the guardian of



Honorius. We can gather but an indistinct conception of him from this sort of testimony, unsupported by that of historians ; we have no materials for forming an opinion of the character of a great man, but the writings of his panegyrists, or of the calumniators whom we know to have been paid by the emperor. Yet, even from representations so contradictory and so doubtful, we gather enough to see in Stilicho a great and awful shade, worthy of that empire whose ruins he defended. His military genius secured him victories, though he no longer found Roman soldiers to command ; he showed not only courage, but self-devotion, on behalf of a country which was already but a name ; and, to crown all, he tried to interest in the national defence, the Roman senate, the men of high rank, the deputies of provinces : but he found in them only unmeaning declamation, and a pompous display of affected sentiment, in the place of patriotism.

This Western empire, which Stilicho was called to defend in the moment of its extremest danger, was now little more than a vast desert, where no soldiers were to be found, where the regular operation of the laws was suspended, and where only two authorities were recognised, — that of a territorial aristocracy invested with no legal power, but beyond the reach of law ; and that of a fanatical clergy, which swayed the multitude at its pleasure.

Italy and Gaul had still officers nominated by the emperor, and municipal magistrates elected by the cities ; but both were alike impotent to carry the execution of the laws into the vast domains of a senator, who was the proprietor of entire provinces.

Africa, the five provinces of which extended over thirty degrees of longitude, or more than six hundred leagues along the Mediterranean coast, had fallen entirely into the hands of the children of the Moor Nabal, its wealthiest proprietor. The slaves of this family, its creatures, its clients, gave it a power against which the emperor himself could not contend. Firmus, whose



revolt we have noticed in another place, was one of these children, after him came Gildo his brother, who from 386 to 398 formed to himself almost an independent sovereignty of this vast region. When at length Stilicho tried to reduce him to obedience, he destined an army of five thousand men to conquer a country at least twice as large as France; nor was this all; he thought himself unable to attempt the enterprise without allying the animosity of a personal enemy to the imperial power. Mascezel had been robbed of his inheritance by his brother Gildo, who had also massacred his children: he cherished all a Moor's thirst for revenge against his brother. It was for him that the conquest of Africa was reserved. He made a descent upon it in 398, with the five thousand soldiers which had been given him to combat his brother; and after he had avenged himself, his unexpected death in crossing a bridge, over which his horse threw him, put an end to this patrimonial power, which had its source neither in the choice of the monarch nor in that of the people. On another occasion, we learn from the disasters of the reign of Honorius, that the brothers of Theodosius, as the richest proprietors of Lusitania, exercised a power in Spain as great as that Gildo had possessed in Africa.

The reign of the sons of Theodosius was fatally marked by the settlement of the barbarians in the West. On the one hand, the Visigoths, setting out from what is now called Servia, after ravaging Greece and then Italy, obtained a fixed abode at the foot of the Pyrenees, and there founded the monarchy, which soon extended over the whole of Spain. On the other, the Germans crossed the Rhine, and, spreading over Gaul and Spain, founded the monarchies of the Burgundians, the Suevi, the Lusitanians, and the Vandals of Bætica. The acts of this great drama must be exhibited in their order. We are called upon alternately to watch the march of history, and to reason upon its results: we implore the indulgence of our readers for the dry detail of facts with which we are compelled occasionally to burthen their memories.

Sufficient time had already elapsed for the Visigoths, established in Mœsia from the year 382, to recover from the evils of a war in which they had lost their ancient country and conquered a new one ; for a nation in the vigour of youth rapidly recruits its strength during repose : while the empire in its decrepitude was gradually becoming feebler by the mere lapse of time. The young men longed to rival their fathers in feats of arms ; and, though solicited to enter the service of Arcadius, they despised military rewards which were not awarded by bravery, and could not endure to see the valour of the soldiers dishonoured by the cowardice of the leaders, or the fortune of adventurers dependent on the favour of courts. Alaric, a prince of the royal house of the Balthi, had, like the rest of his countrymen, made his first campaigns in the armies of the emperor, but when he had subsequently demanded promotion proportionate to the rank he held in his own nation, or to the ability he had displayed in the service of Rome, he received an insulting refusal. He soon taught the feeble son of Theodosius what an enemy he had thus imprudently made : the Visigoths, whose warlike passions he had aroused, raised him on a shield, saluted him as king, and called upon him to lead them on to those rich provinces, in which glory, wealth, and all the enjoyments it procures, would be the prize of their valour. As soon as Alaric announced that he was about to attack the empire, numerous hordes of Scythians marched across the frozen Danube and joined his standard : at the beginning of the year 396, a formidable host, whose progress no line of fortifications could arrest, advanced as far as Constantinople, laying waste the whole country in its line of march.

Till then, Greece had escaped the invasion of barbarians, which rarely extended south of Constantinople ; but Alaric held out to his soldiers the hope of dividing the yet untouched spoil of those illustrious regions. The defiles of Thermopylæ, at the foot of Mount Œta, were abandoned to him by the cowardice of the soldiers :

during a long peace all the fortifications of the cities of Achaia had fallen into decay ; and the Visigoths now penetrated into the sanctuary of ancient civilisation (A. D. 396). He granted a capitulation to Athens ; but he gave up the whole of the rest of this country, enriched with the glory and the beauty of former ages, and hallowed by the memory of the highest moral and intellectual culture which human nature ever attained, to the fury and rapacity of a savage soldiery : then it was that the temple of Ceres Eleusis was pillaged, and the mysteries which had been celebrated there for eighteen centuries were interrupted.

Then, too, began the memorable struggle between the skilful tactics of Stilicho and the headlong courage of Alaric. The former, who had passed the Adriatic with the legions of Italy, knew that his soldiers would never withstand the valour of the Goths : he consequently employed all his art in enticing them into a district of mountain gorges, in which he hemmed them up by a war of posts, always avoiding a battle, and thus as it were besieging them on a mountain, and there reducing them by hunger. Such was the address Stilicho displayed on several occasions, not only against Alaric, but other barbarian generals : but in the campaign of Greece his measures were defeated by those upon whose assistance he might reasonably have calculated. The base courtiers of Constantinople were more afraid of the influence a great man might acquire over their monarch by a signal service, than of the sword of the enemy which hung over their heads : they prevailed on Arcadius to command the general of the West to evacuate his empire ; at the same time the emperor demanded peace of Alaric, and purchased it by appointing him master-general of the infantry in eastern Illyricum.

The vices inherent in despotic government had gradually dried up all the resources of the empire ; but in these last calamities it was more especially the immediate act of the sovereign which brought the most dreadful evils upon his people. When Arcadius, instigated

by the basest jealousy, granted to his most dangerous foe the command of the province he had just laid waste, he placed at his disposal the four great arsenals of the Illyrian prefecture, at Margus, Ratiaria, Naissus, and Thessalonica. For four years, the most skilful armourers of the empire were employed in the workshops of these four towns in forging arms for the Goths. For four years, Alaric was industriously training his soldiers according to Roman discipline, and to the use of arms so superior to those they had been accustomed to bear ; and when, with the aid of the Greeks, he had rendered his subjects far more formidable than they could ever have become without these advantages, he called upon them to show the Romans what use they could make of the lessons they had received from other subjects of the empire. In the autumn of the year 402, he traversed the Julian Alps and entered Italy by the Frioul (Forum Julii).

Even were the campaigns of these two great captains, Alaric and Stilicho, known to us sufficiently in detail to throw any light on the art of war, this would not be the place to follow them out ; still less would it profit us to pause over the scenes of suffering and of misery in which that history is but too abundant. One thing alone deserves our attention : the new proofs which every step brings to view of the exhaustion, the death-like state, of an empire, which still numbered among its members Italy, Spain, France, England, Belgium, Africa, and the half of Germany, — an empire still governed by a great warrior and statesman, yet who, with all his genius, could not impart any vigour to the worn-out frame. Stilicho was, in fact, the real monarch of the West. Honorius, who had attained the age of eighteen, fixed his residence at Milan. His chief pleasure was to breed chickens in the palace, which knew his voice, and fed from his hand. There was certainly no harm in this. It was a very innocent pleasure, and in no respect interfered with the administration of the empire. That nothing might interfere with that

of his poultry-yard, his courtiers had been careful never to pronounce the name of Alaric in his ears, nor to permit any signs of the danger which menaced him, to appear before him, up to the very moment when the king of the Goths had reached the Adige. On the news of the enemy's approach, the emperor's first and only thought was to save his person.

Stilicho, who feared the panic that the flight of the youthful sovereign would spread throughout Italy, with extreme difficulty withheld him, by a promise that he would return very shortly with an army powerful enough to defend him. The winter, during which the Goths had gone into quarters in the neighbourhood of Treviso, gave him a little time to recruit his army. But soldiers were not to be found in Italy; Stilicho was obliged to fetch them from Gaul, and even from Britain. He abandoned to the good faith of barbarians both the banks of the Rhine and the Caledonian wall. He incorporated into his army all the ancient enemies of Rome who were willing to enlist under his banner, and with 40,000 or 50,000 men he recrossed the Alps, in the spring of 403. Alaric, who had crossed the Adige, pursued Honorius, and was already besieging him in Asti, when Stilicho marched to the emperor's relief; compelled the haughty king of the Goths to raise the siege; and took advantage of his devotion to attack him at Pollentia, during the solemnity of Easter. He defeated him in a bloody engagement on the 29th of March, 403; stopped him as he attempted to cross the Apennines and to lay waste southern Italy; forced him to retreat towards the Alps, and there beat him again in the neighbourhood of Verona; and, after all these victories, thought himself happy when the terrible Alaric evacuated Italy, and retired into Pannonia.

Honorius claimed the honours of a triumph in celebration of Stilicho's victories; and this solemnity of ancient Rome was, for the last time, stained with the bloody combats of gladiators. They were soon after abolished for ever, by an edict of Honorius. But that

emperor, who had visited Rome with great pomp (A.D. 404); who, in compliance with the counsels of Stilicho, had paid the senate and the people a deference they had long been unaccustomed to receive from the masters of the world; had not sufficient reliance on the victories he was thus celebrating, to dare to fix his abode either in the ancient capital, or in the metropolis of Lombardy. His first care was to seek in his states a city secure from the attacks of all his enemies. He made choice of Ravenna. This city, originally built on piles, intersected with canals, surrounded with marshes, presented the appearance we now see in Venice, and was no less inaccessible to attack from the land. Scarcely had he retired thither, when the West was alarmed by the march of Radogast, and by the great and final invasion of the barbarians, who from that time never more evacuated the empire.

The general agitation of Germany has been attributed, by some writers, to new movements among the Scythian tribes, to the victories of Touloun, Khan of the Georgians, over the Huns. (A.D. 400.) It appears to us more probable, that the last invasion of the Western empire is to be traced to causes residing in the Germans themselves. Already had several generations of their young warriors successively left their native woods to seek glory and spoil within the boundaries of the empire: it was become a habit; the minds of men were turned in that direction. Each successive expedition more clearly revealed the feebleness of the adversaries the Germans hoped to plunder; and when they saw the Goths establish themselves south of the Danube, ravage Italy and Greece, and threaten the ancient capital of the world, they feared, perhaps, that Alaric would leave them nothing to take. Radogast, king of one of the nations which inhabited the southern shores of the Baltic, (the country now called Mecklenburg,) declared that he had made a vow never to return his sword to its scabbard till he had levelled the walls of Rome, and divided its treasures among his soldiers. A host of

warriors, nay, whole nations, were eager to second him ; so that it is difficult to ascertain which was the tribe more immediately subject to his orders. The Burgundians, the Vandals, the Silingi, the Gepidæ, the Suevi, and the Alans, took arms at the same time ; more than 200,000 warriors flocked from all parts of Germany, and composed these great armies. In many provinces they were accompanied by their women and children, and the country they left behind them was a desert.

Stilicho had been unable to send the legions he had summoned from the frontiers of the empire to repulse Alaric, back to their original stations. He detained them under his command in Italy ; but the whole military force of this gigantic monarchy scarcely exceeded 35,000 men,—so great had been the loss of soldiers in the late wars, and so great the difficulty of recruiting. The Lower Danube was abandoned to the Goths, the Upper Danube was exposed ; the Upper Rhine was confided to the doubtful faith of the Allemans, and the Lower to that of the Franks. Radogast entered Pannonia, without difficulty, at the head of one of the great armies (A.D. 406) ; nor did he experience any resistance on his passage of the Alps, or of the Po, or even of the Apennines. The trembling Honorius shut himself up in Ravenna. Stilicho could hardly collect his soldiers at Pavia. At length he marched in pursuit of Radogast, came up with him near Florence, and, with the same ability with which he had twice attacked and defeated Alaric, drove him back from post to post, shut him up within his fortifications, without ever giving him an opportunity of fighting a battle, and at length besieged him on the arid heights of Fiesole, where, after losing the greater part of his army by hunger, thirst, and disease, he was compelled to surrender at discretion. The vanquished foe, who trusted to the generosity of Honorius, had small ground for hope. The emperor put to death the captive before whom he had trembled.

But the defeat of Radogast did not deliver the



empire. Two other armies advanced upon Gaul. One led on by Gondemar king of the Burgundians, crossed the Upper Rhine, bore along the Allemans with him, and devastated the whole of eastern Gaul. The other, commanded by Godegisela king of the Vandals, marched to the Lower Rhine; they encountered the Franks, who opposed a vigorous resistance: but, after an obstinate combat, during which the Alans came up to the succour of the Vandals just as they were giving way before the enemy, the passage of the Rhine was effected on the 31st of December, 406, and the whole torrent of the barbarous tribes of Germany poured at once, with equal fury, over every part of Gaul. During three whole years massacre, pillage, fire, spread from province to province; while the wretched inhabitants were unable to offer any resistance; while the government made not an effort to defend them; while the conquerors wearied not in their savage work. But as, in their first blind fury, they had destroyed treasures which they now vainly regretted, and had burned storehouses, which would have preserved them from the famine which now threatened them, the remaining spoil was insufficient to satisfy their cupidity. On the 13th of October, 409, a body of Suevi, Vandals, and Alans forced the passes of the Pyrenees, and Spain shared the fate of Gaul. At length these hordes began to feel the need of repose. They fixed their quarters in the provinces they had conquered, in such a manner that each sovereign army could exercise a systematic oppression over the provincials, who were no longer treated as enemies, but as slaves. About the year 410, Spain was portioned out among its Germanic conquerors: the Suevi and the Vandals shared the ancient Galicia; the Alans had Lusitania; the Silingi, Bœtica; whilst in Gaul the Burgundians advanced from the Moselle to the Rhone; the Allemans established themselves in Eastern Helvetia; and the Franks extended their quarters into Belgium. Nevertheless, the Germans made no immediate allotment or distribution of lands: they did not



choose to become citizens at the expense of ceasing to be soldiers.

It may appear matter of astonishment that the great Stilicho did nothing for the defence of the empire: but his power had already been shaken by court intrigues. From the time of his flight from Milan, Honorius had begun to think himself a great captain; and his confidence in his own military talents had been raised by the triumph he had decreed himself. He deemed himself of an age to govern alone; and his first essay in the art of government was to thwart all the operations of his general. A vile favourite, whom he had taken from the situation of illuminator of the palace to place him near his person, had found means to rouse his pride. He continually repeated to him, that people were astonished that, at twenty-five, the emperor should not be his own master. From the time the courtiers remarked the decline of Stilicho's influence, they industriously accumulated obstacles in his way. This illustrious man, worthy of a better age, had tried to restore the dignity of the senate, and to rouse its members to fresh interest in the affairs of the republic. But he had found only rhetors, far more intent on catching popularity by making a display of fine sentiments, or by aping the expressions of their forefathers, than on understanding the state of affairs, their means of defence, or their resources. He had been forced to strive for a long time before he could bring them to sign a treaty with Alaric, which was become absolutely necessary, but which they pronounced unworthy the ancient majesty of Rome. Stilicho had been no less indefatigable in his efforts to raise the courage of the army, and to restore its discipline; but experience had taught him, that it was vain to look for intrepidity, for constancy under privation, for strength to support fatigue, except among his barbarian auxiliaries. The favours he granted, the politic means by which he endeavoured to recruit the ranks of the defenders of Rome from among her enemies, caused

discontent among the soldiers who called themselves Romans. Honorius, and his favourite Olympius, strove to heighten the animosity, and to embitter the accusations against Stilicho. The former seized the moment of his general's absence to review his army at Pavia, and addressed them in a speech calculated to exasperate them against their chief. His aim was, to incite his soldiers to demand the dismissal of a man whom he accused of having abused his confidence. But the sedition he excited burst out with a violence he had not calculated on. The soldiers massacred two præ-tonian prefects, two masters-general of cavalry and infantry, and almost all their generals and officers, because they had been appointed by Stilicho. Honorius, with trembling haste, published a decree, in which he condemned the memory of the dead, and applauded the conduct and fidelity of the insurgent troops. The moment this news was carried to the camp of the confederate army at Bologna, where Stilicho then was, the leaders of the barbarian soldiers, with one accord, offered to defend, to avenge him, and even to seat him upon the throne. He would not expose the empire to the horrors of civil war for his own security or advantage. He refused their offers: he even warned the Roman cities to be on their guard against the confederate troops; and, proceeding straight to Ravenna, seated himself at the foot of the altar of the great church, thus invoking the protection of superstition in default of that he had a right to claim from gratitude. But he could not avert the fate by which greatness in a subject is generally rewarded by baseness on a throne. The count Heradius, who was sent by the emperor to arrest the noble soldier, would have been withheld by scruples from violating the sanctuary: he had none in deceiving the bishop of Ravenna by a false oath. Having thus induced him to deliver up Stilicho into his hands, he struck off his head with his own sword before the porch of the church (August 23d, 408).

Stilicho had too much greatness of soul not to ap-

preciate that quality in others : he honoured his adversary Alaric ; he knew what he had to fear from him, and he had employed his utmost policy to keep at peace with him during the invasion of Radogast. The mean and cowardly Honorius, on the contrary, who was beyond the reach of danger in his retreat at Ravenna, thought that a display of arrogance was a proof of strength, and that to insult an enemy, was to intimidate him. He displaced the bravest and most renowned barbarian captains from the commands they held in his armies ; removed all who professed religious opinions different from his own, from every public office ; thus depriving himself and the state of the services of a great many distinguished pagan or Arian functionaries : and, to complete the purification of his army, ordered a general massacre of all the women and children of the barbarians, whom the soldiers in his service had delivered up as hostages. In one day and hour these innocent victims were given up to slaughter, and their property to pillage.

These hostages had been left in all the Italian cities by the barbarian confederates, as a guarantee for their fidelity to Rome ; when they learned that the whole had perished, in the midst of peace, in contempt of all oaths, one furious and terrific cry of vengeance arose, and thirty thousand soldiers, who had been the faithful servants of the empire, at once passed over to the camp of Alaric, and urged him to lead them on to Rome.

Alaric, in language the moderation of which Honorius and his ministers ascribed to fear, demanded reparation for the insults offered him, and strict observance of the treaties concluded with him. The only answer he obtained was couched in terms of fresh insult, and contained an order to evacuate all the provinces of the empire. It might have been supposed that great armies were ready to support such insolent pretensions ; yet, when Alaric crossed the Alps, in the month of October, 408, he traversed Friuli, the towns of Aquilea, Concordia, Altino, and Cremona, and came up before the walls of

Ravenna without meeting a single foe. He had no hope of reducing that city by siege; but no one attempted to arrest his march across Romagna when he continued his route; and he at length arrived before Rome 619 years after that city had been threatened by Hannibal. During that long interval her citizens had never looked down from her walls upon the banner of an enemy waving in their plains.

But this long term of peace and prosperity had added nothing to their means of defence: in vain did they count 1780 senatorial houses, or palaces enriched with every luxury; in vain did they boast that the revenue of more than one of their senators exceeded 4000 pounds weight of gold, — 160,000*l.* sterling, (for it is well to compare this enormous wealth with that of the country which approaches the most nearly to it); all their opulence, all their splendour, were insufficient to procure them the defence of brave soldiers. The people had long been regarded with distrust; — the people, whom the general organisation of society rendered miserable, and who cared for nothing but public distributions of bread, meat, and oil. The mob, who had for generations been withheld from the use of arms, and whom the higher classes would have trembled to see brought into military training, was devoid of strength and of courage when the enemy appeared without the walls. Alaric did not attempt to take Rome by assault: he blockaded the gates, stopped the navigation of the Tiber, and soon famine took possession of a city which was eighteen miles in circumference, and contained above a million of inhabitants. The Romans were reduced to feed on the vilest and most revolting aliments: we are assured, that these men, who dared not fight, dared to cover their tables with human flesh, nay, even the flesh of their children. That no supernatural aid might be neglected, not only did they first invoke all the celestial powers, by means of the ceremonies of the church, but, on the 1st of March, 409, they had recourse to the gods of paganism, and to the infernal spirits with whom

those gods had been confounded ; these they strove to propitiate by forbidden sacrifices. Honorius ceased not to promise succours, which it was not in his power to grant, and which, indeed, he did not so much as attempt to collect ; this deluded expectation cost the besieged thousands of lives. At length, the Romans had recourse to the clemency of Alaric ; and, by means of a ransom of five thousand pounds of gold and a great quantity of precious effects, the army was induced to retire into Tuscany.

But it seemed as if Honorius had determined on the destruction of Rome, which the barbarians consented to spare ; new favourites supplanted each other in rapid succession in the favour of the monarch, and in the possession of supreme power. A certain road was open to them ;—to flatter his pride, to boast his resources, to repel every idea of concession to the enemies of the state ; while Alaric, in the heart of Italy, reinforced by forty thousand slaves of Germanic extraction, who had fled from Rome, still more powerfully reinforced by the valiant Ataulphus, his brother-in-law, who had led a fresh army from the shores of the Danube, asked only a province, in which to establish his nation in peace. Honorius successively broke off every negotiation begun by his own orders ; obstinately refused what he had already promised, and, at length, exacted a solemn oath from all the officers of the army, who swore on the head of the emperor, that never, and under no circumstances, would they lend an ear to any treaty with the public enemy.

Notwithstanding the thousand provocations he received from the imbecile and imprudent Honorius, Alaric had the generosity to spare the capital of the world, for which he felt an involuntary reverence. But, taking possession of the mouth of the Tiber, and the city of Porto, which contained the chief granaries, he sent word to the senate, that, if they wished to save Rome from famine, they must choose a new emperor. The senate made choice of Attalus, a prætorian prefect,

who made peace with Alaric, and named him general of all the armies of the empire. But the new emperor was neither less incapable, nor less presumptuous than Honorius: he would not follow the advice of Alaric; he neglected to cause himself to be recognised in Africa: in a word, he committed so many faults, that, after allowing him to wield the sovereign power for a year, Alaric was compelled to depose him. He again offered peace to Honorius; was again repulsed with insult, and then, for the third time, led back his army to the gates of Rome; and, on the 24th of April, 410, the year 1163 from the foundation of the august city, the Salarian gate was opened to him in the night, and the capital of the world, the queen of nations, was abandoned to the fury of the Goths.

Yet this fury was not without some tinge of pity; Alaric granted a peculiar protection to the churches, which were preserved from all insult, together with their sacred treasures, and all those who had sought refuge within their walls.

While he abandoned the property of the Romans to pillage, he took their lives under his protection; and it is affirmed, that only a single senator perished by the sword of the barbarians. The number of plebeians who were sacrificed appears not to have been thought a matter of sufficient importance even to be mentioned. At the entrance of the Goths, a small part of the city was given up to the flames; but Alaric soon took precautions for the preservation of the rest of the edifices. Above all, he had the generosity to withdraw his army from Rome on the sixth day, and to march it into Campania, loaded, however, with an immense booty. Eleven centuries later, the army of the Constable de Bourbon showed less moderation.

A religious veneration for the city which had vanquished the world, for the capital of civilisation, seemed to have protected Rome against her most puissant enemy. Yet, it might soon have been imagined that even this generous foe was punished for daring first to lay a

sacrilegious hand on her majesty ; for, at the end of a few months, Alaric fell ill and died, in the full career of victory, and full of the projected conquest of Sicily and Africa. Alaric was buried in the bed of the Bisentium, a little river which flows beneath the walls of Cozenza ; and the captives who had been employed to dig his grave, to turn the course of the river, and afterwards lead it into its former bed, were all massacred, that none might be able to reveal the spot where reposed the body of the conqueror of Rome.

In fact, the Goths, always wandering, could not protect the graves of their illustrious men. They thought with pain that, at their death, they would leave their bones entombed in hostile ground, and that the dastardly inhabitants, who never dared to meet them face to face, would revenge themselves on their remains, for the terror they had inspired. Satisfied with uninterrupted conquest, and gorged with spoil, they once more demanded a country and a home ; and Ataulphus, brother-in-law of Alaric, whom they raised on their shields and proclaimed king, seconded their wishes, and renewed those negotiations with the court of Ravenna, which Alaric had been unable to bring to a conclusion. The terror caused by the sack of Rome had at length shaken even the stubborn pride of the emperor : his ministers, liberated from their oath by the death of Alaric, eagerly represented to him that, in adopting the the Gothic king's army as soldiers of the republic, he would augment his power, and would avenge himself of his enemies ; that Ataulphus appeared disposed to rid Gaul of the barbarians, in consideration of obtaining a small part of the deserts of that province ; that he offered to render a still more important service in warring against the usurpers who had dared to assume the purple ; — foes infinitely more dangerous and more criminal than the public enemy, since they assailed the majesty of the emperor himself, whilst the others directed their hostilities against the common and ignoble herd of subjects. A treaty was actually concluded, by which Ataulphus and



the Visigothic nation engaged to combat the enemies of Honorius in Gaul and Spain; in consideration of which, the latter should cede to them the provinces of Aquitanian and Narbonnese Gaul, in which they were to establish themselves, and to found a new Gothland, an independent people. In 412 Ataulphus marched back his army and his nation from the extremity of Campania into southern Gaul: the cities of Narbonne, Toulouse, and Bordeaux were open to them; and the Visigoths at length hailed with joy the land in which they were at length to find a resting place and a home.

Ataulphus, the first of the Visigoths who had led his countrymen into southern Gaul and Spain, appears to have had another motive for his reconciliation with the Romans, which belongs rather to romance than to history. Among the captives carried off from Rome, and compelled to follow the camp of the Visigoths, was Placidia, the sister of Honorius, who was very superior to either of her brothers in talents and in ambition. Ataulphus fell in love with her, and regarded an alliance with the daughter of the great Theodosius, and the sister of the two reigning emperors, as a new glory to himself. Among the Romans the reigning family was not distinct from all others, as among the Germanic tribes; the title of princess was unknown; and Placidia had no other alternative than celibacy, or a union with one of her brother's subjects; yet such an alliance still appeared to a Roman, far superior to one with a barbaric king. An invincible prejudice had hitherto severed the Romans from all other nations; and the first proposals for this marriage, addressed to the court of Honorius, were regarded as an insult. Placidia thought otherwise; she beheld Ataulphus, whose noble countenance seemed formed to efface the ancient prejudices of Rome. Before the Goths quitted Italy, she married their leader and sovereign at Forli; but the royal nuptials were celebrated anew with greater splendour at Narbonne, the capital of the new kingdom won by Gothic valour. "A hall was decorated after the Roman fashion," says Olym-



piodorus, a contemporary historian, “in the house of Ingenuus, one of the first citizens of the town: the place of honour was reserved for Placidia, while Ataulphus, clad in a Roman toga, seated himself at her side: fifty beautiful youths, attired in silken garments, whom he destined as a gift to his bride, then advanced, each presenting to her two cups, the one filled with gold, the other with gems,—a part of the spoil of Rome. At the same time Attalus, that Attalus whom Alaric had created emperor, appeared and sang the epithalamium.”

Thus did the calamities of the world furnish trophies to decorate the festivals of its masters.

## CHAP. VII.

THE BARBARIANS ESTABLISHED IN THE EMPIRE. — STATE OF BRITAIN, AND OF ARMORICA. — SETTLEMENTS OF THE FRANKS ON THE RHINE, THE BURGUNDIANS ON THE RHONE, THE VISIGOTHS ON THE LOIRE. — MIXED GOVERNMENTS; ROMAN PREFECTS, BARBARIAN KINGS AND ASSEMBLIES. — STATE OF SPAIN, OF ITALY, OF PANNONIA, AND OF AFRICA. — UNIVERSAL SUFFERING. — DEATHS OF ARCADIUS AND HONORIUS. — DYNASTIES OF THE BARBARIC KINGS. — FREQUENCY OF ATROCIOUS CRIMES. — FABULOUS ACCOUNT OF FRANKIC KINGS. — VISIGOTHS, SUEVI, ALANS, VANDALS. — CONQUEST OF AFRICA BY THE VANDALS UNDER GENSERIC. — THEIR FEROCITY. — FALL OF CARTHAGE. — KINGDOM OF THE HUNS. — ATTLA. — HIS TREATY WITH THEODOSIUS II. — HIS NORTHERN CONQUESTS. — HIS ATTACK ON THE EMPIRE. — SUBMISSION OF THE GREEKS. — EMBASSY TO HIS CAMP. — PASSAGE OF THE RHINE. — DEFEAT OF ATTLA BY JETIUS AT CHALONS. — INVASION OF ITALY BY ATTLA. — FOUNDATION OF VENICE. — DEATH OF ATTLA. — DISSOLUTION OF HIS EMPIRE. — A. D. 412—453.

FROM the time the barbarians had established themselves in all parts of the empire, this vast portion of the world, heretofore subject to the levelling influence of a despotism which had broken down all distinctions and all differences, now presented the wildest assemblage of dissimilar manners, opinions, languages, religions, and governments. Spite of the habits of servility which were hereditary among the subjects of the empire, their subordination was broken up; the law no longer reached them; oppression or protection no longer emanated from Rome or from Constantinople. The supreme power, in its impotence, had called upon them to govern themselves; and ancient national manners, ancient local opinions, began to reappear under the borrowed garb of Rome. But this strange motley of provincialisms was nothing compared to that introduced by the barbarians who had pitched their camps in the midst

of Roman cities, and whose kings were constantly intermingled with senators and with bishops.

At one extremity of the Roman dominions, the island of Britain escaped from the power which had civilised but enervated it. Stilicho had withdrawn the legions from it for the defence of Italy. The usurper Constantine, who had revolted against Honorius between the years 407 and 411, and who, after reducing Britain, had attempted the conquest of Gaul, led thither all the soldiers who still remained in the island. After he was defeated, and his head sent to Ravenna, Honorius did not choose to deprive himself of any portion of his troops for the defence of so remote a province: he wrote to the cities of Britain as if they already formed an independent confederation, and exhorted them to provide for their own defence. Fourteen of these cities were considerable; several had already made great progress in arts and commerce, and, above all, in that Roman luxury which so rapidly tamed and deadened the fiercest courage. London was a large and flourishing town; but, among its numerous inhabitants, not one was found who dared to take up arms. Its municipal government, established on the Roman system, like those of York, Canterbury, Cambridge, &c., would have given them the advantages of a republican administration, if they had preserved a little more public spirit; but the poison of a foreign domination had sapped the vital energies of the country. It was in the country, and not in the towns, that we must look for the first symptoms of the revival of a national feeling. The Celtic language, which was almost extinct in Gaul, had been preserved in Britain,—a proof that the rural population was not utterly crushed. It seems that the rich proprietors, the British senators, were aware that their security and their power depended wholly on their union with the people; it is probable that they lived in the midst of their peasantry, and learned their language: at all events, we find them reappearing under British, and not under Roman names, in that struggle which

they were soon called upon to sustain with the Picts and Scots, and, at a later period, with the Saxons.

The condition of Armorica, or Little Britain, was nearly similar, both in the nature of its population, which had likewise preserved the Celtic language and manners, and in its remoteness from the centre of the empire. The Armorican cities also formed a league which raised a sort of militia for their own defence, and inspired some respect up to the time of the Frankic invasion. The vigour of the fierce Osismians, who inhabited the farther coast of Britany; their courage, their agility, their attachment to their hereditary chieftains, recalled to the rest of the Gauls what their fathers had been. They resembled those mountaineers of Scotland whom a great poet has so admirably depicted, such as they remained scarcely more than half a century ago.

In spite of the prohibitory laws of Augustus and Claudius, many of them adhered to the primitive worship of the gods of the Druids; those atrocious divinities, whose altars were buried in the depths of forests, and stained with human blood. Others had embraced Christianity, and, during four centuries, they furnished a great number of saints to the church of Rome. So long as the British heroes, such as Hoel, Allan, Judicael (to whom several churches were dedicated), retained the vigour of youth or manhood, they knew no other passion than that for war; they poured down by night on the nearest Roman or Gaulish villages, which they pillaged and burned: but, when their ferocity was tamed by age and began to give place to the terrors of a future judgment, they shut themselves up in convents and lived a life of the severest penance.

The Franks had begun to cross over from the right to the left bank of the Rhine, and had made some settlements in Belgium; but, faithful to their alliance with the empire, which had made the greatest exertions and sacrifices to preserve their friendship, they every where appeared in the character of soldiers of the emperors; their numerous petty sovereigns solicited imperial dig-

nities ; their highest ambition was to rise at the court of the sons of Theodosius ; and they had learned how to combine the arts of intrigue with valour. If they oppressed and despoiled the peasantry upon whom they were quartered ; if, in a sudden burst of fury, or in a fit of rapacity, they fell upon large cities ; if even Trèves, the capital of all the Gauls, and Cologne, the chief town of Lower Germany, were on several occasions pillaged by them, the emperors and their prefects were too sensible of the importance of their Frankic allies to cherish long resentment, and peace was soon concluded at the expense of the defenceless sufferers.

The Burgundians in eastern Gaul, the Visigoths in southern, also called themselves the soldiers of the emperors. Their condition was, however, very different from that of the Franks ; the entire nation had transmigrated into a new abode, without acknowledging any fixed limits : it had extended its dominion wherever it could make its power feared. The king of the Burgundians sometimes held his court at Vienne, on the Rhone, sometimes at Lyons or Geneva ; the kings of the Visigoths at Narbonne, at Bordeaux, or oftener at Toulouse : the city was subject to them, yet Roman magistrates still continued to regulate the police, and to administer justice according to Roman laws, and in favour of Roman subjects. The Visigoths and the Burgundians had appropriated lands either waste, or taken from the original proprietors without many formalities ; these were abandoned to their flocks and herds, or occasionally cultivated by their slaves ; but negligently and without any outlay which must await a tardy return. They chose to be ready to quit the fields they had sown, the next year, if needful. The two nations had not yet taken root in the soil. The Visigoths sometimes passed over from Aquitaine into Spain ; the Burgundians from the banks of the Rhine to those of the Moselle. The habits of a wandering life, confirmed by half a century, could not be broken through at once : all the Visigoths were Christians, but of the Arian sect,

as were also the Burgundians. The bishops hated heresy far more than paganism, and they sedulously nourished in their flocks an aversion which the violence of these arrogant guests was sufficient to excite, and which sometimes burst forth in formidable commotions. Nevertheless, the priests understood too well where the power of the sword lay, to dispute the authority of these barbaric kings as they had lately disputed that of the emperors. At Toulouse and at Vienne, they paid their court conjointly with the senators; the prelates, in all the pomp of their ecclesiastical ornaments, and the senators, still wearing the once awe-inspiring toga, mingled with the rude warriors whom they hated and despised, but whose favour they sought and gained by dexterous flattery.

The same form of civil administration still subsisted. A prætorian prefect still resided at Trèves; a vicar of the seventeen Gallic provinces at Arles: each of these provinces had its Roman duke; each of the hundred and fifteen cities of Gaul had its count; each city its curia, or municipality. But, collaterally with this Roman organisation, the barbarians, assembled in their *mallum*, of which their kings were presidents, decided on peace and war, made laws, or administered justice. Each division of the army had its Graf Jarl, or Count; each subdivision its centenary, or hundred-man; and all these fractions of the free population had the same right of deciding by suffrage in their own mallums, or peculiar courts, all their common affairs. In cases of opposition between the barbarian and the Roman jurisdiction, the overbearing arrogance of the one, and the abject baseness of the other, soon decided the question of supremacy.

In some provinces the two powers were not concurrent: there were no barbarians between the Loire and the Meuse, nor between the Alps and the Rhone; but the feebleness of the Roman government was only the more conspicuous. A few great proprietors cultivated a part of the province with the aid of slaves; the rest was desert, or only inhabited by Bagaudæ, runaway slaves,

who lived by robbery. Some towns still maintained a show of opulence, but not one gave the slightest sign of strength ; not one enrolled its militia, nor repaired its fortifications. Tours, renowned for the tomb of St. Martin, and the miracles attributed to it, appeared to be a capital of priests : nothing was to be seen within its walls but processions, churches, chapels, and books of devotion exposed for sale. Trèves and Arles had not lost their ancient passion for the games of the circus, and the crowd could not tear themselves from the theatre when the barbarians were at their gates. Other towns, and still more the villages, remained faithful to their ancient gods ; and, spite of the edicts of successive emperors, many temples were still consecrated to paganism ; many continued so, even to the end of the following century. Honorius wished to confer on the cities of southern Gaul a diet, at which they might have deliberated on public affairs : he did not even find public spirit enough to accept the offered privilege. It is true that they suspected, and, probably, not without reason, that his edict concealed some projects of financial extortion.

The description we have given of the state of Gaul applies equally to that of Spain, where the kings of the Suevi, the Vandals, the Alans, the Silingi, were encamped with their troops and their followers in the midst of Roman subjects, who had long ceased to offer resistance, yet whose abject submission had not earned for them the peace of slaves. A great portion of Spain was still Roman ; but the districts which the barbarians had not yet entered had no communication with each other, nor with the seat of government : they could hope for no protection from any neighbouring aggression. Besides, if the barbarians occasionally plundered them with rapacity, or even, at their first coming, butchered the inhabitants most exposed to their fury, they afterwards protected the remaining population against the extortions of tax-gatherers ; and the demands of the state were so excessive, that the people often preferred the



sword of the Vandal to the staff of the lictor. Even Italy, which was, perhaps, more uncultivated than any of the distant provinces,—Italy, whose richest plains were disfigured by wild forests, or unwholesome marshes,—was not exempt from the barbarian yoke. Although no longer occupied by a conqueror, she found hard masters in the confederates, or auxiliary troops of Germans and Scythians, of which the armies were almost entirely composed. Their tyranny, which was that of the sword, did not, however, preserve the inhabitants from the more oppressive power of the Roman magistrates. Pannonia and the banks of the Danube were no sooner evacuated by the Goths, than they were occupied by other nations of barbarians. The Moors and the Gætuli, and still more the fanatical Donatists and Circumcellians, kept Africa in a continued state of alarm. In short, there was not a single province of the Western empire in which a uniform government was maintained, or in which, under a common protection, man could live securely among his fellow-men.

The influence of the early events of the reign of Arcadius and Honorius was universal, and their consequences may, in some respects, be perceived to this day. Very different was the close of the reign of these indolent, vain, and cowardly princes. We should gain but little instruction from any attempt to understand the base intrigues of their palace; and, with regard to the competitors for the empire, who arose successively in Britain, in Gaul, in Spain, and at Rome, it would be useless to record their names. But it is remarkable that, in five years, seven pretenders to the throne, all very superior to Honorius in courage, talents, and virtues, were in turn sent captive to Ravenna, or punished with death; that the people constantly applauded the sentence passed upon them, and maintained their allegiance to the legitimate authority. So much progress had already been made by the doctrine of the divine right of kings, which the bishops had begun to preach under Theodosius; and so fully de-



terminated did the Roman world appear, to perish with an imbecile monarch, rather than choose for themselves a deliverer.

Arcadius, who was governed alternately by his ministers, his eunuchs, and his wife, died at the age of thirty-one, on the 1st of May, 408, and left, at the head of the empire of the East, his son, Theodosius II., who was yet a child, with a council of women to direct him. The life of Honorius was of longer duration; he lived till the 15th of August, 423; but he also left his empire to a child, Valentinian III., who was his nephew. This young prince was under the guidance of his mother: she was the same Placidia, the sister to Honorius and Arcadius, who had married Adolf, king of the Visigoths. Her second husband was Constantius, one of the best generals of the Western empire, who obtained the title of Cæsar. He was the father of Valentinian III., and died before Honorius.

Never could the helm of the state have passed into the feeble hands of women and of children under more unfavourable circumstances. The great revolution which was slowly taking place throughout the West, was hastened by the minority of the two emperors; yet the government of Placidia, though weak, was honourable: she had the talent of selecting and attracting to her court some great men, though she had not the power to restrain their passions, nor to make them act consistently for the public good. After her death, the world learned to estimate her loss by the vice and cowardice of her son. (A. D. 450—455.)

As we shall not bestow on these weak emperors the attention which it would require to become acquainted with all the scandalous details of their reigns, neither shall we attach to the barbarian kings of the same period a degree of importance of which they are equally unworthy. These kings, powerful as long as war lasted, while their whole nation was in action and relied implicitly upon the prudence of the leader of their choice, ceased to be persons of importance as soon as peace was

concluded. From that moment every German determined to be his own defender, his own avenger, and to decide alone, and without advice, on whatever he judged advantageous ; he was little influenced in his determinations by public authority, and less still by that of kings ; for the little which was done for the common weal was done by the assembly of the people. Thus the kings are only conspicuous by their private conduct, or rather, by their crimes and vices ; for their virtues could only have been displayed in the administration of government, and in this they had no part. To the pride of riches they added the consciousness of being above the law ; while the encouragements of the flatterers who surrounded them, especially of their Roman subjects, who excelled the barbarians in the arts of intrigue, carried to an unheard-of pitch the corruption of these chiefs of the people. It would be difficult to find, in any class of men, even among those whom public justice has consigned to the hulks and the galleys, so many examples of atrocious crimes, assassinations, poisonings, and, above all, fratricides, as these royal families afforded during the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries. It would be unjust to the nations they governed to judge of them by the example of their chiefs, who alone occupy a conspicuous station in history. It is not the fact, that all feelings of respect for virtue, love of kindred, compassion for inferiors,—in a word, that justice and humanity were generally extinct among the barbarians, notwithstanding all the horrors we find in their annals, and of which we have suggested but a small part. But these nations were accustomed to consider their kings as a race apart, distinguished from themselves by their long hair ; a race not subject to the same laws, nor moved by the same feelings, nor protected by the same securities. These kings, keeping themselves aloof from all other men, were singular in having family names, and in intermarrying only with each other ; and we owe to them the introduction of that system of relationship

between crowned heads which was before unknown in the world.

We have no authentic account of the kings of the Franks during the greater part of the fifth century. The reigns of Pharamond, Clodion, Merovæus, and even Childeric (A. D. 420—486), which are found registered in the histories of France, have scarcely any foundation in truth. The chronicle which contains their names says, that they reigned over the Franks ; but, if the fact is true, it is still uncertain whether they governed the whole of the nation ; the country where they resided is unknown ; and, in short, no authentic history of their race can be traced earlier than the reign of Clovis. Neither do we know any thing of Gondemar, who is supposed to have been king of the Burgundians from 406 to 463 : the crimes of his four sons, three of whom perished in the most horrible manner by fratricide, will be noticed hereafter.

The succession of the Visigothic kings is better known. More civilised than any other of the Germanic tribes, the Visigoths permitted a greater stability of the royal authority, and formed a united body, even in time of peace. They had also some historians.

Adolf, who had led the Visigoths into Aquitaine and into Spain, who had contracted an alliance with the Romans and had married Placidia, was assassinated at Barcelona, in the month of August, 415, by one of his own domestics. His successor Siegeric put to death six children of Adolf by a former wife, reduced Placidia to the wretched state of a captive, and made her walk before his horse twelve miles through miry ways, with the rest of the Roman women. He was killed in his turn, after a few days. Wallia, his successor, made a new alliance with the Romans, restored Placidia to her brother, and declared war upon the other barbarians who had invaded Spain. He conquered them in a succession of engagements, exterminated the Silingi, and compelled the Suevi, the Alans, and the Vandals to retreat into the mountains of Galicia ; he

then restored the rest of Spain to the empire, and finally settled himself in peace at Toulouse, in Aquitaine, where he died, towards the end of the year 418. Dietrich, or, according to the Roman corruption, Theodoric, the son of the great Alaric, was elected in the room of Wallia, by the free choice of his soldiers. During a reign of thirty-three years he established the dominion of the Visigoths in the south of Gaul and in Spain. He was killed in 451, in the battle of the plains of Champagne, where Attila was defeated. His eldest son, Thorismund, who succeeded him, was assassinated two years after by his brother, Theodoric II., who ascended the throne; and he also, after a reign of thirteen years (A. D. 453—466), was murdered by another brother named Euric, who reigned from 466 to 484. In these times, fratricide was so common a crime among those of royal blood, that, although stained with it, Theodoric II. and Euric are justly considered as the two best and greatest kings who mounted the throne of the Visigoths.

The history of the Suevi in Gallicia and part of Lusitania, is little known; but, at the same period, we discover in it sons revolting against fathers, and brothers assassinating brothers. The Suevi kept their ground for more than half a century in Spain, before they embraced the Christian religion and became Arians. Being surrounded on all sides by the Visigoths, their history contains merely an account of the wars which they had to maintain against these neighbours: they were long and bloody; 164 years were passed in fighting, before they could be brought to yield. In 573, Leovigild, king of the Visigoths, united them to the monarchy of Spain.

In the same province, the Alans had been almost destroyed by Wallia, in 418. The fate of the Vandals was more remarkable: it had a more durable influence upon civilisation, and a closer connection with the history of the Roman empire. Like the Suevi and Alans they had been conquered by Wallia, and driven among

the mountains of Gallicia; but when Spain was restored to the officers of Honorius, and afterwards to those of Valentinian III., the Vandals, led by their king, Gonderic, again spread themselves in Bœtica, took Seville and Carthagera, and added to the command which they had obtained of the plains, the possession of a fleet which they found in the latter city. About this time Gonderic died, and Genseric, his illegitimate brother, succeeded him. He was small in stature, lame in consequence of an accident, and austere in his manners and habits, disdaining the luxuries of the people he conquered. He spoke slowly and cautiously, inspiring reserve when he was silent, and terror when he gave way to the transports of anger. His ambition was without bounds, and without scruple: his policy, not less refined than that of the civilised people whom he opposed, prompted him to employ every kind of stratagem: he knew how to captivate the passions of men, while he embraced the whole world in the extent of his projects. He had not long been master of Carthagera, when the count Boniface, general of the Romans in Africa, sent him an invitation to cross over to that country.

Placidia, who governed the court, and what remained of the empire, in the name of her son Valentinian III., had chosen two men to direct her councils and her armies who were undoubtedly possessed of great talents, high character, and as much virtue as it was possible to preserve under such a government. One of these—the patrician Ætius, son of a Scythian who had died in the service of the empire—was brought up as a hostage at the court of Alaric: he governed Italy and Roman Gaul more by his influence over the barbarians than by his authority as a Roman magistrate. The other, count Boniface, who was the friend of St. Augustin, and reckoned among the protectors of the church, governed Africa. Ætius was jealous of his colleague, and resolved to destroy him by driving him to acts of rebellion. With the blackest perfidy he en-

gaged Placidia to recall Boniface, and at the same time entreated Boniface not to return, but to fly to arms if he would preserve his head. Boniface imagined he had no resource but in appealing to the enemies of his country. His crime, which in its nature was inexcusable, appears to us still more so from the extent of its consequences.

By thus opening Africa to the Vandals, he not only hastened the fall of the empire, but he annihilated the resources of an immense country, which, in consequence of this first invasion, has been lost to Christendom and to civilisation; preserving to this day the name of Barbary, with a government worthy of the name. The repentance of Boniface, however, the favour of the church, and the friendship of St. Augustin, have transmitted his name to posterity without that weight of infamy which would have attached to it, if the rights of country had been understood in his day.

Genseric landed upon the shores of Africa in the month of May, 429, with about 50,000 men, collected not only among the Vandals, but from all the other Germanic adventurers who were willing to follow his standard. He invited the Moors, who, at the decline of the empire, had recovered some portion of their independence and boldness, and seized with joy an opportunity for pillage and revenge. He also ranged under his colours the Donatists and Circoncellions, who had been driven by persecution to the highest pitch of fanaticism; and who, reckoning among them three hundred bishops, and several thousands of priests, were able to carry with them a large part of the population. With these formidable auxiliaries Genseric advanced into Africa, less as a conqueror wishing to subdue a rich kingdom, than as a ravager bent on destruction. Furious in his hostility to an effeminacy which he despised, to riches which might be employed against him, to a population which, though subjugated, might keep him in dread of revolt, he resolved to lay waste the whole country.

His excesses have, doubtless, been exaggerated by the hatred and terror of the Africans ; but the total ruin of Africa, and the annihilation, as it may almost be called, of the population of so vast a country, are facts of which succeeding events leave not the smallest doubt.

Boniface having discovered the perfidy of Ætius, and terrified at the crime he had himself been led to commit, made vain efforts to remedy the frightful evils he had occasioned ; but it was too late. After being beaten by Genseric in a great battle, he concentrated the Roman forces in the three cities of Carthage, Hippo, and Artha ; the rest of Africa became a prey to the Vandals. Boniface himself withdrew into Hippo, and joined his friend, St. Augustin, who died during the siege of that town, the 28th of August, 430. Some reinforcements which Boniface received from Italy and the East at the same time, enabled him once more to take the field. He marched against Genseric ; but he was conquered, and obliged to evacuate Hippo. He then retired into Italy, where he soon after died of the consequences of a wound which he had received in an engagement with Ætius.

Between the taking of Hippo and the final reduction of Africa, eight years elapsed, during which Genseric seemed more occupied in shedding the blood of his relations than that of his enemies. The race of Vandal kings could not escape the common fate of barbaric monarchs. Gonderic, the brother of Genseric, had left a wife and children whose right to the throne was superior to his own. He beheaded the sons and cast their mother into a river of Africa. But it was not without a struggle of some duration that he ruined or destroyed all their adherents. Placidia believed him to be constantly occupied in parrying or avoiding the poignard of the assassin ; she depended upon a treaty she had made with him ; while Genseric was, in fact, preparing his forces to surprise Carthage. This great city, the Rome of the African world (as a contemporary



calls it), opened its gates to the Vandals on the 9th of October, 439. The cruelty which had stained the triumph of Genseric in the six provinces of Africa, was not less conspicuous in the capture of the capital. After a sea of blood had been shed, every kind of property was pillaged; even the houses and estates near the city were divided among the conquerors; and Genseric made it an unpardonable crime for a Carthaginian or Roman to preserve any part of his possessions.

The loss of Africa was, perhaps, one of the greatest calamities which could have overtaken the Western empire: it was the only province the defence of which had hitherto been attended with no difficulty; the only one which supplied money, arms, and soldiers, without requiring any in return. Africa was also the granary of Rome and of Italy. The gratuitous distribution of corn among the people of Rome, of Milan, and of Ravenna, had put an end to the cultivation of land throughout the peninsula. It was impossible for the cost of production to be paid in Italy, while government levied the taxes in kind from the plains of Africa, and thus obtained sufficient for the support of the Roman people. The cessation of this annual tribute, instead of reviving agriculture, caused a dreadful famine, and a farther diminution of the population. The part which Ætius had borne in the ruin of Africa, by the shameful treachery which had been brought to light, must have rendered him an object of aversion to Placidia. But a danger now threatened the empire far more alarming than any it had known before; one which involved the whole population; the existence of all the cities; the property and the life of every individual; and it was impossible to part with the only general who was capable of inspiring the troops with confidence, or of uniting into one body the forces of the Romans and of the barbarians:—Attila was at hand.

Attila, the Scourge of God,—such was the name in which he delighted,—was the son of Mundzuk, and the nephew of Rugilas, whom he succeeded on the

throne of the Huns, in 433. That inundation of Tartar hordes which had driven before it the Alans, the Goths, and perhaps all the Germanic nations on the frontiers of the Roman empire, had made a voluntary halt. Having arrived at Dacia (the modern Hungary), the Huns had been enjoying the riches of the country which they had wrested from the Goths and their immediate neighbours. At the time when they stayed their conquests, they had ranged themselves under different chiefs, who all bore the title of king, and who acted in a manner wholly independent of each other. Rugilas himself had several brothers, who had, by turns, made war upon the Greeks, the Sarmatians, and the Germans, their neighbours. Attila also had a brother named Bleda, who shared the throne with him; but he proved, by becoming his assassin, that the manners of the Scythians resembled those of the Germans. He now stood alone at the head of that puissant nation of shepherds, which would neither enjoy nor endure the possession of civilisation or of fixed abode; and he began to make the world tremble anew.

Attila took advantage of the terror with which his uncle Rugilas had inspired the Greeks, to impose upon Theodosius II., at Margus, the most shameful treaty that ever monarch signed. All those among the unfortunate subjects of Attila, or of the kings he had conquered, who had sought an asylum on the soil of the empire, were delivered up by the Greek ambassador to their furious master, and were crucified before his eyes. In like manner all the Romans who had escaped from his bondage, were restored to him, unless they could ransom themselves by paying twelve pieces of gold. The empire of Constantinople engaged to pay an annual tribute of 700 pounds of gold to the empire of Scythia: on these conditions Attila allowed Theodosius still to reign, while he employed himself in the conquest of the North.

This conquest was the most extensive that had ever been accomplished by armies in the course of one reign.

Attila brought into subjection the whole of Scythia and Germania. His authority appears to have been acknowledged from the confines of China to the Atlantic. We are ignorant, however, of the particulars of his warlike expeditions, as well as of the victories obtained by his lieutenants. When he ascended the throne he was already past the prime of life, and was distinguished from his fellow-countrymen much more by his political sagacity than by his personal valour or activity. Among the Tartar portion of his subjects he had excited a high degree of superstitious enthusiasm, by pretending that he had found the sword of the God of War ; this became his symbol, and, being fixed on the summit of an immense pile of wood, received divine honours from the Scythians. To subjugate the Germans, a different language and other artifices were required. But it is not very difficult for a barbarian conqueror to obtain the voluntary submission of the warlike and savage nations whom he invites to share his conquests, without asking them to change their laws, of which he is ignorant and reckless, or to pay him a tribute which their poverty could not supply. In proposing to them to follow his standard to the field, he does but invite them to their favourite sport.

It was for this reason, no doubt, that Attila succeeded, in a few years, and with no great difficulty, in causing himself to be acknowledged King of kings, by the very nations who had trodden under foot the Roman empire. And he was truly the king of kings ; for his court was formed of chiefs, who, in offices of command, had learned the art of obedience. There were three brothers of the race of the Amales, all of them kings of the Ostrogoths ; Ardairic, king of the Gepidæ, his principal confidant ; a king of the Merovingian Franks ; kings of the Burgundians, Thuringians, Rugians, and Heruli, who commanded that part of their nation which had remained at home, when the other part crossed the Rhine half a century before. The names of a great number of other nations who inha-

bited the vast regions of Tartary, Russia, and Sarmatia, are not even come down to us.

After so many victories, which left no trophies to posterity, Attila turned his arms once more against the countries of the South. He asserted that the treaty which he had concluded at Margus, with the emperor of the East, had been violated by the Greeks; and, putting in motion simultaneously the immense multitude of warriors who followed his banners, he crossed the Danube at every point, from high Pannonia to the Black Sea. He advanced upon the whole extent of the Illyrian peninsula, destroying every thing in his way (A. D. 441—446). Seventy cities were levelled to the ground by his army; villages, houses, harvests, all were burnt; and such of the wretched inhabitants as escaped the sword, were carried away captive beyond the Danube. The Greeks were defeated in three pitched battles, and the army of the Huns advanced to the very walls of Constantinople, which had recently been shaken by an earthquake, and fifty-eight of their towers thrown down.

Yet the empire of the East survived even this devastation: some of its provinces were secure from invasion. Theodosius II. showed great patience under the sufferings of others. He rebuilt the walls of his capital; and, shut up within the precincts of his palace, he scarcely perceived the war that raged without. Nevertheless, one negotiator after another was sent to the camp of Attila; and, by dint of abject concessions, and of money distributed among his ministers, the Greeks induced him to retire beyond the Danube. Thither their ambassadors followed him. In their way to his camp they had to pass over those cities of Mœsia, where the inhabitants were slain, and the houses razed; where the place of the streets was only marked by ruins, and ashes, and dead bodies. Among the remains of the churches, however, they discovered some sick and wounded wretches, who had not had strength to crawl away, and who still dragged on a miserable existence. The ambassadors were moved to tears as

they gave alms to the wretched beings who lingered among the ruins of Naissus, formerly one of the great arsenals of the empire. They crossed the Danube in boats, or canoes, formed of a single tree hollowed out ; for the arts of civilised life had already disappeared, and the earth, like its inhabitants, had relapsed into savageness.

At the court of Attila, in an obscure village of Hungary, the ambassadors from the East found, among the crowd of barbarians and of conquered kings, the ambassadors from the West, who were come to appease the terrible monarch and to endeavour to maintain peace. What formed the strangest, the most incredible contrast, was, the paltriness of the motive which brought them there. It was for the sake of some golden vessel belonging to the church of Sirmium, which Attila pretended to have been taken from him at the conquest of that city, that Ætius, or Valentinian III., sent ambassadors from Rome, and that the world was threatened with a war between Tartary and Europe. One of the ambassadors of Theodosius was secretly instructed by his master to bribe the prime minister of Attila, and persuade him to assassinate the dreaded conqueror. The Scythian monarch was not ignorant of this treacherous plot ; but, though he manifested his indignation by some violent expressions, and treated the Roman name with profound contempt, he respected, even in these traitors, the rights of ambassadors, and left Theodosius in peace.

About the time when Theodosius II. died (28th of June, 450), and when the Greeks, from an inconceivable veneration for the royal blood, bestowed the crown on his sister Pulcheria and the husband she might marry (she married Marcian, an old senator), Attila advanced from the banks of the Danube to those of the Rhine, to occupy Gaul, at the head of the Germanic nations.

At the confluence of the Rhine and the Neckar, he met a party of Franks, who had submitted to his authority, and with whom he passed the river, took and

burned the city of Metz, and destroyed all its inhabitants: in like manner he laid waste Tongres, and, crossing the country as far as the Loire, laid siege to Orleans.

The patrician *Ætius*, who governed the West in the name of *Valentinian III.*, had established his reputation in Gaul by victories over the Franks, the Burgundians, and the Visigoths. He had scarcely any Roman soldiers in his ranks; but he sedulously cultivated the friendship of the Scythians and Alans, from whose race he sprang, and had engaged numerous bands of them in the service of the empire. He had been careful to conciliate the favour of *Attila* himself, to whom he had entrusted his son, perhaps as a hostage, or, possibly, in order to secure his being brought up far from the dangers of the imperial court. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate to undertake to defend Gaul against him. The ancient inhabitants, the Romans, were without power to resist such an enemy: the barbarians of German race who were established in Gaul, were terrified at the idea of a Tartar invasion, which threatened to change into a desert that country in which they began to taste the tranquil enjoyments of life. *Ætius* visited successively the kings of the Franks, the Burgundians, and the Visigoths, who were able to afford him powerful assistance. He likewise had recourse to the smaller tribes, who wandered at will throughout Gaul, encouraging them to assemble under his standard. The *Taifalæ*, in Poitou; the Saxons, in Bayeux; the Breones, in *Rhætia*; the Alans, in Orleans and at Valence; the Sarmatians, who were dispersed over all the provinces, promised him their assistance. Other barbarians, who did not form any national body, engaged themselves in the mercenary troops of *letes* and confederates. Even the *Armoricans* furnished soldiers; and of this collection of troops, among whom were to be found every variety of arms and of language, *Ætius* formed the army of the empire.

But in military skill, and in the power of tactics, the Roman empire retained its superiority to the last stage of its decay. When an able general had drawn up his troops and inspired them with courage, he was not appalled by the numbers of the enemy. Attila was said to have invaded the Gauls with 500,000 men. Whatever was the real strength of his army, the multitude of these hungry warriors was to him an incumbrance, while to Ætius it was an advantage. The king of the barbarians vainly wished to take advantage of the most extensive plains of Gaul, to draw out all his battalions: he retreated from the environs of Orleans to the neighbourhood of Châlons, in Champagne. Ætius pursued him, and fiercely disputed with him the possession of a small eminence which commanded the rest of the plain, and seemed to both generals an important position. At length, Thorismund, the eldest son of the king of the Visigoths, remained master of it. Jornandes relates, that the rivulet which flowed at the foot of this hill was swollen with blood, till it overflowed its banks like a torrent. Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, was killed at the commencement of the battle, and lay buried under heaps of slain. His son Thorismund and Ætius were separated from the main body of their army, and were very near falling into the hands of the Huns; but Attila, meanwhile, was so alarmed at the prodigious losses he had experienced, that he hemmed himself in with a wall of Scythian chariots, which he opposed as a fortification to the assailants. Night closed in before it was possible to know on which side victory lay. Attila's quiescence in the morning showed that he considered himself conquered. If the account of an almost contemporary historian may be credited, 162,000 men lay dead on the field of battle.

This victory was the last that adorned the annals of Rome: if it did not preserve *her* from ruin, *we*, at least, have been saved by it;—saved from Tartar barbarism and Russian civilisation. If the empire of Attila had been perpetuated, if it had spread over Gaul and



the temperate regions of Europe, perhaps the nature of the country would have led the Huns to renounce their pastoral life, as the Moguls renounced it in India, and the Mantchou Tartars in China: but the vices of the nation, stamped upon it by servitude, would have been perpetuated, as they have been in Russia—as they have been wherever the Tartar has ruled; and the nations which at this day diffuse light and knowledge throughout the globe, would scarcely have been in a condition to receive what might have reached them from without.

It is, indeed, with astonishment and admiration, that we contemplate the most formidable power which ever affrighted the world, dashed to pieces against the last ruins of ancient civilisation. The Roman empire had declined so rapidly, that it is difficult to imagine how it furnished aspirants to a throne so surrounded with danger and disgrace. But the dominion of Attila was overthrown to the very dust, before that of Theodosius fell. Ætius did not care to disturb the retreat of the Scythian conqueror, who was formidable even in defeat: he waited until he ventured to seek his revenge, and to attack the Romans anew. In the campaign which followed (A.D. 452), Attila poured forth his troops from Pannonia, passed the Julian Alps, and advanced to the siege of Aquileia. The extent of his ravages, and the certainty of having no mercy from the barbarian, produced an effect upon the people of Italy that led to the erection of a splendid monument, which has perpetuated to our days the memory of the terror he inspired. All the inhabitants of that rich part of the plain of Italy which is situated at the mouths of the great rivers, and called Venetia, took refuge in the low lands, upon the islands, almost covered with water, which choke the mouths of the Adige, the Po, the Brenta, and the Tagliamento. There they sheltered themselves under huts made of branches, and transported thither a small part of their wealth. In a short time they constructed more commodious habitations, and several small cities were seen

to rise as it were out of the waters. Such was the origin of Venice; and that haughty republic justly called herself the eldest daughter of the Roman empire. She was founded by the Romans while the empire was yet standing, and the independence which characterised her early years was still inviolate to our own time.

Aquileia withstood a lengthened siege; but all the other cities of northern Italy,—Milan, Pavia, Verona, and, perhaps, even Turin, as well as Como, at the foot of the Helvetian and Gallic Alps,—opened their gates to the conqueror. Disease, the natural consequence of the intemperance, the violence, and the vices of a barbarian army, avenged, as they may again avenge, the Italians; and Attila began to feel the pressing necessity of leading back his companions in arms to a country less pernicious to natives of a northern clime, when the ambassadors of Valentinian and the senate of Rome came to demand peace. They were accompanied by pope Leo I. The striking figure and calm self-possession of the venerable pontiff inspired the people with respect, and struck awe into every heart, not even excepting that of the pagan king, although he had professed himself a prophet. With a moderation unknown to him, perhaps the effect, in some measure, of religious fear, he granted peace to the empire. In the following year (A.D. 453), Attila died in Dacia, during the intoxication of a banquet. His empire fell with him. Ardaric, his favourite, established the monarchy of the Gepidæ in Dacia, between the Carpathian mountains and the Black Sea, in the very spot which had been regarded by Attila as the seat of his power. The Ostrogoths took possession of Pannonia, between Vienna and Sirmium; and Irnak, the youngest son of Attila, retired with the Huns into Little Tartary, where the remnant of this people were enslaved, some years after, by the Igours, who issued from the plains of Siberia.

## CHAP. VIII.

FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE. — ROME TAKEN AND SACKED BY GENSERIC, CALLED IN BY EUDOXIA, WIDOW OF VALENTINIAN III. — TEN EMPERORS IN TWENTY-THREE YEARS. — ODOACER. — FINAL EXTINCTION OF THE FORM OF THE EMPIRE IN THE WEST. — CHANGE UNIMPORTANT TO THE PEOPLE. — THEIR WRETCHED CONDITION. — SOME CITIES OF THE WEST RETAIN THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO THE EASTERN EMPIRE. — GROWTH OF THE FRANKIC MONARCHY. — CHLODWIG, COMMONLY CALLED CLOVIS. — HIS VICTORY OVER SYAGRIUS. — HIS MARRIAGE WITH CHLOTILDE OF BURGUNDY. — HIS CONVERSION. — BATTLE OF TOLBIAC. — HIS BAPTISM. — HIS WARS WITH THE BURGUNDIANS, AND WITH THE VISIGOTHS. — HIS TREACHERY. — HIS ASSASSINATION OF ALL THE KINGS OF HIS FAMILY. — HIS PROTECTION OF THE CHURCH. — MIRACLES ATTRIBUTED TO HIM. — LIMITED POWER OF THE FRANKIC KINGS. — SOVEREIGNTY OF THE ARMY. — STATE OF GOVERNMENT. — DEATH OF CLOVIS. — A. D. 476—511.

It is impossible not to remark, in communities and in nations, a principle of vitality, a power of resistance, which is brought into action after great calamities, and prolongs the existence of sinking states when they seemed on the brink of annihilation. This power has, in its effects, a resemblance to the vital energy which exists in man and other organised beings ; but it is not, like that, one of the mysteries of nature. On the contrary, the principle of which we are speaking is the necessary, the easily anticipated consequence of those efforts which each individual makes to improve his condition, and to defend himself from the common calamities, or to meet them with the smallest possible injury : in thus providing for his own security, he is really labouring for the preservation of the community to which he belongs.

On every side, the empire of Rome had been surrounded by causes which conspired to work its ruin.

During the three first centuries, it had constantly been declining; and when we recollect that, in the century and half which followed,—a period which we have examined in detail,—the empire was assailed by attacks, any of which seemed sufficient to overthrow it, our only wonder will be how it continued to exist.

The vital principle exhibited in the human frame often repairs the ravages of disease, or entirely surmounts them. Although, in some cases, it does but prolong the sufferings of the body, we are not permitted to endeavour to abridge these sufferings; for we know not but the moral may become perfect through the pains of the physical being. It would be a fiction of the fancy, however, to attribute to social bodies the properties or the sensitiveness of individual natures; and we must not allow our pity and regret for the long decline of Rome, nor our reverence for all its grandeur and its glory—for the thousand recollections about to be obliterated,—to make us forget that truer compassion which we owe to men like ourselves; to whole generations that endured the lingering torments of their country's expiring state, and the burden of all its calamities.

The revolution which overthrew the Roman empire, and swept away the ancient forms of civilisation from the earth, made room for new combinations and new social institutions, and led to progress of another kind. It was, perhaps, the most important of all the convulsions which have agitated the human race. It was time for this great change to take place; it was time that the universal languor and feebleness of soul which lowered the character of humanity should give place to a new principle of virtue, or, at least, to a new principle of action.

Large empires derive a power of self-preservation from their size: it is their privilege to be able to endure bad government in proportion to their extent. Ancient Greece afforded instances of odious tyrants, whose names are for ever covered with infamy. Yet, neither Dionysius of Syracuse, nor Phalaris, nor Pisistratus,

would have been able to inflict upon their fellow citizens such calamities as those to which the subjects of the bad emperors were exposed. Never would those men have thought of confounding the innocent with the guilty in one universal proscription ; of rasing a city to the ground, or putting all its inhabitants to the sword : such conduct would have been their own destruction, since the city was their whole domain. On the contrary, the merciless acts committed by the emperors, the national chastisements which they inflicted, as well as the calamities resulting from the wars in which they engaged, were extensive in proportion to the size of their territory.

But man does not become the less sensible of his sufferings, because the state to which he belongs is of vast dimension ; and the number of victims to a single act of cruelty, or a single fault, exceeded all belief. In like manner, the conduct of a weak, vain monarch, who persisted in a disastrous war, produced consequences not in proportion to the character of the man, but to the extent of his kingdom. The obstinacy of Theodosius II. within the walls of Constantinople, or of Honorius at Ravenna, which they mistook for noble daring, produced the entire devastation of Illyricum, Gaul, and Italy. No empire but that of Rome could have withstood such shocks. From the time when the monarchy of Attila had fallen, and the Goths and Vandals, established in their new country, had begun to exchange the work of destruction for that of preservation, the empire of the West had regained a chance of prolonging its languishing existence ; for that of the East, which was scarcely less enfeebled, or less surrounded by powerful foes, maintained itself a thousand years longer. Ravenna, the seat of government, was equally sheltered from foreign invasion ; and if the empire had enjoyed a period of tranquillity like that which Italy obtained a few years after the extinction of the Western emperors, so great is the predilection of every people for an old established authority, and so strong their prefer-

ence for evils with which they are familiar, to untried and doubtful reform, that in all probability the alterations which had been the result of force, would have been admitted into the frame-work of society. A new organisation would have brought about a closer connection between the centre of government and those provinces which were not conquered ; and the state, superior in extent to any in modern Europe, would have recovered the means of resistance.

But monarchical states are not only subject to the calamities which assail them from without, through the jealousy or hatred of their neighbours ; they have also the chance of falling under the sway of the most stupid, or the basest of mankind. These chances of succession were fatal to the empire of the West. From the death of Attila, in 453, to the extinction of the imperial dignity, in 475, ten emperors, in the space of twenty-three years, succeeded each other on the throne ; and the ten revolutions which hurled them from it were more than so frail a structure could resist.

These revolutions were in a great degree attributable to the last descendant of the great Theodosius. Valentinian III. had reached the age of manhood ; his mother was dead, Boniface was dead, Attila was dead. Valentinian imagined the highest privilege of the imperial dignity to be that of securing impunity for all the vices which subject private individuals to the punishment of the laws. The greatness and renown of Ætius were irksome to him ; and the first time his coward hand brandished a sword, he employed it, with the help of his eunuchs and courtesans, to kill the general who had saved, and who alone could still save, the empire. In less than a year after (March 16. 455), he was assassinated, in his turn, by Petronius Maximus, a senator, whose wife he had insulted.

Maximus was then acknowledged emperor ; but the people found in him nothing deserving of supreme power. It was equally impossible for the Romans not to despise the descendants of Theodosius, and not to

extend their contempt to those men who, devoid of either virtues or talents, took advantage of the fall of these princes to raise themselves to the throne.

As nothing indicated clearly where the right to sovereign power resided, the road to it was again laid open to ambition, intrigue, and crime. The sufferings and the ignominy of the Roman empire were increased by a new calamity which happened in the year of Valentinian's death. Eudoxia, the widow of that emperor, who had afterwards become the wife of Maximus, avenged the murder of her first husband, by plotting against her second; reckless how far she involved her country in the ruin. She invited to Rome Genseric, king of the Vandals, who, not content with having conquered and devastated Africa, made every effort to give a new direction to the rapacity of his subjects, by accustoming them to maritime warfare, or, more properly speaking, piracy. His armed bands, who, issuing from the shores of the Baltic, had marched over the half of Europe, conquering wherever they went, embarked in vessels which they procured at Carthage, and spread desolation over the coasts of Sicily and Italy. On the 12th of June, 455, they landed at Ostia. Maximus was killed in a seditious tumult excited by his wife. Defence was impossible; and from the 15th to the 29th of June, the ancient capital of the world was pillaged by the Vandals with a degree of rapacity and cruelty to which Alaric and the Goths had made no approach. The ships of the pirates were moored along the quays of the Tiber, and were loaded with a booty which it would have been impossible for the soldiers to carry off by land.

The unhappy Romans were compelled, by protracted tortures, to discover all their hidden treasures: neither were they secure from the cupidity of Genseric's troops when stripped of all they possessed. The hope of extorting a ransom from their relations or friends led to thousands of noble captives being carried over to Carthage. Eudoxia herself shared in the miseries which she had brought upon Rome: Genseric forcibly carried



her off, with her two daughters, the only survivors of the race of Theodosius the Great, in one of his vessels ; and in spite of the attachment the Romans had recently shown to the hereditary claims of this family, they found themselves, against their wishes, reinvested with the power of bestowing the crown on a ruler of their choice. This prerogative falling to a people alike devoid of national spirit and of protecting institutions, of respect for justice or for virtue, could not fail to prove fatal. The Gauls, the Greeks, the confederate barbarians who composed the army, all in turn contended for the privilege of giving a chief to the empire ; and the favourite of one party was no sooner invested with the purple, than a hostile faction rose up to dethrone him.

In the calamitous period of twenty-one years, which embraces the last convulsive struggles of the Western empire (A.D. 455—476), one man signalised himself above all those ephemeral emperors whom he created or dethroned at his will, without having it in his power to occupy their place. This was the patrician Ricimer, a Swabian or Suevus by birth, and the son of the daughter of Wallia king of the Visigoths. A popular sentiment, which it is surprising to discover in a country where there could not be said to be a people, rose in opposition to this barbarian, when he would have assumed the purple ; though the men he nominated to wear it were sure to be elected. The haughty Swabian, disdaining to obey those whom he considered as his own creatures, accomplished their downfall before they were well seated on the throne. He thus destroyed the very root of civil authority and obedience. He died the 20th of August, 472. At this period, the provinces of the West acknowledged no other power than that of the barbarian troops, who took the name of Confederates ; these men governed Italy. Two of their chiefs, who came in the train of the king of the Huns, next contended for the empire.

Orestes, a Patricius of Pannonian extraction, who had long served Attila as secretary and ambassador, placed upon the throne his own son Romulus Augustus,

who, in mockery of his youth, was called Augustulus ; while Odoacer, the son of Edecon, another minister of Attila, excited the Confederates to revolt against the chief they had just elected. He promised them a third of the soil of Italy to divide amongst them ; caused Orestes to be put to death, and shut up his son in Lucullus's villa, in Campania, without choosing to appoint his successor.

Thus, in 476, was accomplished the extinction of the empire of the West. But this revolution, so important in our eyes, which forms so marked an epoch in history, was so disguised from the view of contemporaries, that they did not foresee its consequences. Odoacer compelled the senate of Rome to send away the imperial insignia to Zeno, emperor of Constantinople ; declaring, that one ruler was sufficient to govern the whole empire. He conveyed a request to this emperor, that he might himself be allowed to govern the diocese of Italy, under the title of Patricius. It is true, he also took the appellation of King. This was a barbaric dignity, which had not been held incompatible with the command of an army, or of a Roman province. It rather denoted a ruler of men, than of territory. It was conferred on Odoacer by his soldiers, among whom the Heruli were, probably, the most numerous ; whence he is often represented as king of the Heruli. Meanwhile the imperial government was little changed from what it had been during the last century in Italy ; that is to say, the power was completely in the hands of armed barbarians ; while, at the same time, the senate of Rome continued to assemble as usual ; the consuls were appointed yearly, one by the East, the other by Italy ; the imperial laws were proclaimed in Italy, and respected as before ; and none of the municipal or provincial authorities were changed. It is difficult to discover what that public opinion was, and under what form it was expressed, which had still power to prevent the sovereign of Italy and of the army from taking upon himself the title of Roman Emperor, and to convince him that he was too weak to attempt the sup-

pression of rights and claims which he was unable to assert for himself, although he could not endure to see them granted to another. We should look in vain for Romans, or for Italians, who had still so far preserved the dignity of their ancient prejudices as to repel a master who should adopt the title of King of Rome or of Italy. Odoacer, however, felt that such a power existed, and took care not to oppose it. He founded anew the kingdom of Italy, and called it by another name. He was independent, without daring to appear so. By the distribution of lands in Italy among the confederate soldiers, he satisfied their cupidity without relaxing their discipline ; and as he no longer recruited his army with the barbarian adventurers who had yearly flocked to his standard, he kept it within moderate limits, though sufficiently powerful to guard his frontiers. He made no attempt to extend his dominions beyond Italy, from which Sicily and Sardinia had already been separated by the invasions of Genseric : on one occasion, however, he made war against Illyricum, and on another against Noricum, with equal success. The whole extent of country between the Alps and the Danube had been fertilised by Roman agriculture, and enriched by Roman commerce, and by the residence of Roman legions : it was looked upon as the nursery of the best soldiers of the empire. But it had been so devastated by successive invasions, that the race of its Roman inhabitants was nearly extinct, and was succeeded by barbarians of whose history nothing is known. The Rugians, who possessed it at the time of which we are speaking, were conquered by Odoacer, and great numbers of them brought captive into Italy, to assist in the cultivation of the deserts of that country. Deserts they might truly be called. The population had been swept away by every scourge under heaven ; war, plague, famine, public tyranny, and domestic slavery. Throughout the preceding century, the existence of the people had been entirely artificial. They were principally supported by the distributions of corn,

which the emperors had bound themselves to continue at Rome, Milan, and other great towns where the court resided. These largesses had ceased with the loss of Africa and the ruin of Sicily. Odoacer did not attempt to renew them. Meanwhile most of the landed proprietors had ceased to cultivate their estates: there was little encouragement to incur great expense in growing corn, which was afterwards given away in the market-place. The rearing of cattle had for a time superseded the cultivation of grain; but both the herds, and the slaves who tended them, had been carried off by continual incursions of barbarians. The desolation of these regions is frequently expressed in simple yet affecting language in the contemporary letters of the saints. Pope Gelasius (A. D. 496) speaks of Emilia, Tuscany, and other provinces, in which the human race was almost extinct. St. Ambrose, of the towns of Bologna, Modena, Reggio, Piacenza, which remained deserted, together with the adjacent country. Those who have seen the Campagna di Roma in our own days, have witnessed the desolation of a country ruined by bad laws, even more than by foreign aggression. Let them imagine the gloomy scenery which now surrounds the capital, extended over every part of Italy, and they will have some idea of the kingdom of Odoacer.

The usurpation of Odoacer had relaxed, but not severed, the tie which united the more distant western provinces to the empire. Several districts of Spain, and particularly the sea-coast, had preserved their independence against the Suevi and the Visigoths; some towns in Africa had escaped the attacks of the Vandals; and there were provinces in the centre of Gaul which obeyed neither the Franks, Burgundians, nor Visigoths. In those territories which had been occupied by the barbarians, they were looked upon (according to the legal expression which assigned them their quarters) as guests, rather than as masters. The inhabitants did not cease to consider themselves as Romans; and they long retained their name, their language, their customs,

and their laws. The eyes of all were turned towards Constantinople ; they all recognised as their emperor, Zeno (A. D. 474—491), who had succeeded to Leo (A. D. 457—474) upon the Eastern throne. The Greek emperors escaped the storm which raged around them, by their good fortune more than by their wisdom. They were unacquainted with the languages of the Western provinces, which they despised as barbarian ; and they were alike ignorant of their condition and of their interests. They had no means of defending, scarcely any of governing them ; and, as they had no chance of drawing supplies from them, they abandoned their administration to men of wealth and rank, who assumed the title of Count of the several cities. These counts flattered the emperor in their correspondence, and were flattered in return by imperial titles : the power they exercised was that of independent sovereigns.

Ægidius, count of Soissons, seems to have been one of the most powerful of these nobles of Gaul, who, during the decline of the empire, were indebted to their wealth for a kind of sovereignty. He gained several advantages over the Visigoths, at the head of an army of Franks accustomed to serve in the pay of Rome ; a circumstance which has caused it to be said that he reigned over the Franks during the exile of Childeric, the father of Clovis. His son, Afranius Syagrius, also governed Soissons with the title of Count, during the ten years which succeeded the fall of the Roman empire (A. D. 476—486). He was by these means brought into the neighbourhood of the Franks, who were ancient allies of the empire, and accustomed to fight under its banner for payment ; but he had nothing left to offer them, — neither battles nor spoils. The Franks, however, without making war, had contrived to extend their frontier in Belgium. They were become masters of Tournai, Cambray, Terouane, and Cologne ; and in each of these cities they had a different king. All these petty kings ascribed their origin to Merovæus (Meer-wig, or Sea Hero), for the date of whose half fabulous

existence we must rather go back to the first appearance of the Franks, about the year 250, than to the middle of the fifth century, where it is commonly placed. There was one among them,—a young man, scarcely twenty years of age,—who was greatly distinguished by his personal appearance, and by his bravery, and who had already reigned five years over the Franks of Tournai. His name was Clovis\*: he was the son of Childeric, who had been banished on account of the licentiousness of his manners; but who was afterwards recalled by his tribe when age had calmed his passions. Like all the rest of his race, he worshipped the gods of Germania; but his enthusiastic mind was ever ready to credit all the prodigies which were related to him by the priests of a different religion, who easily won him over to their belief. In 486, he proposed to the warriors of Tournai, of the tribe of the Salian Franks, to go and share the riches of their Roman neighbours, who neither knew how to defend them, nor how to bestow them upon other defenders. Not more than 3000 or 4000 Franks answered his appeal, and took up their francisque or war hatchet, ready to follow him. Ragnacar, another king of the Franks, at Cambray, came with his followers to join the standard of Clovis. They sent a message of defiance to Syagrius. The Roman count was not so formidable as to make it necessary to resort to surprise; nevertheless, he occupied the frontier, and all the soldiers north of the Seine, calling themselves Roman or legionary, or *letes* or *federal*, assembled at his order. The armies met; Syagrius was beaten, and the Franks took and pillaged Soissons. Syagrius in his flight crossed the Seine; but the cities along this river and the Loire, although calling themselves Roman, had taken no thought about their future safety. They possessed no soldiers, no treasure, no means of resistance.

Syagrius could obtain no succour from them; he therefore passed the Loire, and advanced to Toulouse, to

\* The Roman corruption of Chlodwig, or, in modern German, Ludwig; in modern French, Louis. — (TRANS<sup>d</sup>)

crave the assistance of Alaric II., who had reigned for two years over the Visigoths. The councillors of this king, who was yet a child, thought the moment favourable for extinguishing the last remains of Roman power. They took Syagrius, therefore, and, loading him with chains, sent him back to Clovis, who suffered him to die in prison.

And this is nearly all that we can ever know concerning the combats which finally annihilated the dominion of the Romans in Gaul, and laid the foundation of the French monarchy. The task of the historian is no longer what it was, when, following the annals of Rome, he had to choose from rich and varied materials ; to combine, to reconcile, to select. Grief and shame had reduced almost all the West of Europe to silence. Who, indeed, could wish to preserve the details of revolutions, every crisis of which exposed to view the vices of the people and of the government? The Germans could not write, the Romans would not. One man alone, a prelate and a saint, — Gregory, bishop of Tours, — undertook, at the end of the following century, to make known to us the origin of the French monarchy ; and, by his work, he affords the only light that has been thrown upon the other countries of the West. It has been abridged, and copied, and amplified, by turns, from the seventh century to our own time : but commentaries serve only to mislead us ; we must consult the original, if we wish to come at truth. This rude narrative ought to satisfy us ; it exhibits at once the manners of the age, and the opinions of the church ; and though it consists almost entirely of a tissue of crimes, we ought not hastily to turn from its perusal. It is right to know what we have to dread from the various revolutions of human society. We shall set a higher value on the virtues of our contemporaries, and on the happiness we enjoy, and we shall endure with greater patience the evils which accompany all human institutions, when we know what our ancestors really were.



Clovis had fixed himself at Soissons. The rich booty which he had divided among his victorious warriors, and which, according to the custom of the Franks, had been distributed by lot in equal portions amongst all the soldiers, had drawn fresh adventurers to their standards. There was no other king of the Franks who seemed to equal him in activity and courage ; and the German was always free to choose the chief with whom he preferred to share the dangers of the war. Nearly a third part of Gaul, from the Oise to the Loire, was given up without defence to the pillage or conquest of the Franks. We have no record of their progress in these provinces. Whatever may have been the weakness and cowardice of the Romans, it was impossible for an army of 4000 men to occupy at once their rural domains and their cities. Fourteen years elapsed between the first victory of Clovis over Syagrius, and the time when the Loire, the Mozelle, the Jura, and the Rhine, formed the boundaries of his kingdom. During this period, from 486 to 500, the Romans negotiated with him, in hopes of lightening the yoke which they were forced to bear. They sent a deputation to the conqueror, and, by the payment of tribute money, bought his protection.

The bishops, on their side, were intent on the conversion of the king who was to reign over them. They found his mind accessible to that fanaticism with which they wished to inspire it ; and as he was not yet a Christian, nor consequently imbued with a sectarian partiality, they imagined he would be more favourable to orthodox opinions than the kings of the Burgundians and Visigoths, who were Arians. They resolved to take advantage of his fondness for women, to gain him over to their side ; and after causing him to divorce his wife—who was a Frank and a pagan, and the mother of his eldest son,—Aurelian, a Gaul, the Christian adviser of Clovis, negotiated his marriage with Chlotilde.

The barbarian kings intermarried with none but women of royal blood ; and Clovis would have scorned the daughter of a subject. He was not yet powerful

enough to obtain the daughter of a king of the Vandals, the Burgundians, or the Visigoths ; but Chlotilde was at the same time of royal descent, and persecuted. Gondicar, king of the Burgundians, who died in 463, had left four sons, each of them bearing the title of king, commanding the armies, and sharing the conquests of their nation. But Gondebald, the eldest of these four princes, took away the life of his three brothers in succession. Having surprised two of them, Chilperic and Godemar, in their residence at Vienne, he killed Chilperic, who had surrendered himself his prisoner, with his own hand ; ordered his wife to be thrown into the Rhone with a stone tied round her neck ; and her two sons to be beheaded, and their bodies cast into a well.

Two daughters remained captive : one of these was Chlotilde. Godemar, the other brother, had taken refuge in a tower ; but the savage Gondebald had the lower part filled with combustibles, and burned him alive. The fourth brother, Godegesil, perished ten years later.

Chlotilde, who escaped the disastrous fate of her house, is supposed to have been in confinement at Geneva. She had been educated by an orthodox bishop. She was handsome, and enthusiastic ; and she felt it an act of piety to hate her persecutor. She abhorred him as the murderer of her nearest kindred, and, still more, because he was an Arian ; but she dissembled her hatred at the moment of her marriage. Gondebald, like many other kings, thought his crimes forgotten, as soon as he could forget them himself ; and consented to the marriage of his niece with Clovis, as a bond of union between the two nations. Ste. Chlotilde, as she was called by the priests, was very imperfectly known to her uncle Gondebald. No length of time, no attempts at reconciliation, no benefits conferred, could eradicate from her heart the hatred she had conceived. Her marriage was celebrated in 493 ; and, thirty years after, she demanded and obtained the vengeance for which she had constantly panted. The

confidence which the bishops of Gaul had placed in the charms of Chlotilde was fully justified. She converted her husband ; persuaded him first to have his children baptised ; and afterwards prevailed on him to seek the protection of her God in a moment of danger.

In 490, the Allemans had invaded all the country which lies between the Moselle and the Meuse. To the Franks, this was a national war ; all their tribes assembled, and gave battle to the aggressors at Tolbiac, four leagues from Cologne. They were repulsed, however, and seemed upon the point of being routed, when Clovis invoked the God of Chlotilde : animated with fresh courage, he again attacked the enemy ; the Alaman chief was slain ; and his soldiers immediately offered to join the standard of Clovis, and acknowledge him as their king. The two nations spoke the same language, their origin was the same, and their manners and customs were similar ; they were, therefore, easily united ; and Clovis returned from the field of Tolbiac at the head of an army much more numerous than that which he had led thither, or than any which he had ever before commanded. He was acknowledged king by his enemies, and suzerain or chief by the other kings of the Franks, who till then had been his equals.

On his return to Soissons, his seat of empire, Clovis became one of the catechumens of St. Remi, the archbishop of Rheims : his soldiers, carried away like himself by the universal belief of the people amongst whom they lived, by the miracles which they heard attested, and by the magnificence of the catholic worship, readily followed his example. On Christmas-day, 496, he repaired, with an army of only 3000 soldiers, to the cathedral of Rheims, where St. Remi poured upon him the water of baptism, uttering these words, which have been handed down to us :—" Bow down thy head, oh ! Sicambrian, with humility. Adore what thou hast burnt, and burn what thou hast adored." The joy of the clergy throughout Gaul was boundless, when they heard of the conversion of king Clovis. In him, the

orthodox believers gained a defender, and an avenger ; a persecutor of their rivals, at the moment when their need was greatest. For the emperor Zeno at Constantinople, and all the barbarian kings,—at Ravenna, at Vienne, at Toulouse, at Carthage, in Spain and in Germany,—were either heretic or pagan. Hence it is, that the king of the Franks has been called the eldest son of the church. St. Avitus, archbishop of Vienne, on the Rhone, wrote to Clovis,—“ Your faith is our victory.” This prelate was a Burgundian subject ; but he rejoiced in the expectation that Clovis would attack the rulers of his nation ; and all the clergy of Gaul, whether they were subject to the Burgundians or Visigoths, showed the same zeal for the future triumph of Clovis. At the same time, the confederated towns of Armorica, which hitherto had defended themselves against the barbarians by the force of their own arms, offered to treat with Clovis. They entered into an alliance with him, or, rather, became incorporated in his nation ; and the Armoricans were placed upon an equal footing with the Franks. All the barbarian soldiers that remained scattered throughout Gaul, who till then had followed the standards of Rome, under the name of *Letes* or *Confederates*, were in like manner adopted by the Frankic nation ; the new king saw his empire extending to the ocean ; to the Loire, which separated it from the Visigoths ; to the mountains around *Langres*, the boundary of the Burgundian territory ; and to the Rhine, which divided it from the independent Franks.

Such an extent of conquest might have sufficed to satisfy the ambition of the little chieftain of 3000 warriors. But Clovis knew that he could only maintain his influence over his companions in arms by new victories, and by holding out fresh booty to their rapacity. Many of the soldiers lamented the submission of the Roman provinces. Each of those protected by Clovis was rescued from the cupidity of plunderers : but he endeavoured to persuade them, that whatever ad-

ditions he had made to his territory, there would always remain in Gaul provinces to pillage, estates to parcel out, and inhabitants to reduce to slavery.

Clovis sought an occasion of quarrel with the two nations which shared with him the empire of Gaul ; but with that policy to which he owed success, even more than to his valour, he began by giving them insidious counsels before he attempted to surprise them.

The Burgundians were first the object of his attack. They were governed by the two brothers of Chlotilde : Godegesil, who had fixed his seat at Geneva ; and Gondibard, who resided at Vienne. The kingdom was not divided between them, but each had endeavoured to secure a large number of warriors, or *Leudes* : this name, which answers to *lieges*\*, describes those partisans attached to their chiefs by benefits conferred. Each of the brothers, in distrust of the other, had retired to as great a distance as possible, to escape from perfidious snares, and to enjoy at liberty the pleasures then attached to kingly power. From this mutual dread proceeded the custom so universal among barbarians, of designating kings by the name of their capitals, rather than by that of their provinces. One was *king at Vienne*, the other *king at Geneva*, but both of them were kings of the Burgundians. In the year 500, Clovis gained over Godegesil : he persuaded him to separate himself from his brother at the moment when the Franks were giving battle to his countrymen ; and as a reward for his compliance, he promised to assist him in gaining sole possession of the throne of the Burgundians. He then declared war upon this people, and led on his Franks to the combat. The two nations met upon the banks of the Ousche, near Dijon ; but at the very moment when the battle was about to begin, Godegesil, with all his forces, deserted the national banner, and joined that of Clovis. Gondebald, in dis-

\* *Leute* — people. (German.) — (Transl.)

may, took to flight, and could not believe himself safe until he had shut himself up in Avignon. Godegesil lost no time in reaching his brother's palace at Vienne, and taking possession of all the riches it contained ; while Clovis pursued his ravages into Provence, where, tearing up the vines and burning the olive trees, he forcibly carried off the peasants, and loaded his soldiers with booty. But when he endeavoured to render himself master of Avignon, he found the walls too strong for warriors so ignorant of the art of besieging : he was obliged, therefore, to enter into a compromise with Gondebald, and to consent to retire to the banks of the Seine, with all the spoils which his troops had obtained.

Gondebald being delivered from the fear of the Franks, immediately marched to Vienne with a great body of Burgundians, who were indignant at the treachery of Godegesil. He gained entrance through an aqueduct, and having found his brother, who in terror had sought refuge in a church, he put him to death, as well as the bishop who had granted him asylum. He destroyed by horrible tortures all those whom he accused of participating in his brother's treason, and caused his authority again to be acknowledged throughout the army of the Burgundians.

Clovis, in the mean time, had not been making conquests ; possibly, this was not his object ; but he had been enriching his army. At the end of a few years, he led it forth on another expedition. Alaric II. reigned over the Visigoths, and between him and the Franks there had been some disputes. Clovis proposed to him to hold a conference in an island on the Loire, near Amboise : here he settled all their differences, removed all Alaric's anxiety about his own projects, and a lasting peace was confirmed between the Visigoths and the Franks by mutual oaths. On his return home, he assembled his troops on the Champ de Mars, between Soissons and Paris, in the spring of the year 507. " I cannot bear," he said, " that those Arians (the

Visigoths) should possess the best part of Gaul : let us go forth against them, and when, by God's help, we have overcome them, we will reduce their country under our dominion, and their persons to slavery." A longer harangue was not required to excite the Franks to warfare. They made the air resound with the clang of their arms, and followed their king to the field.

Clovis had deceived his enemy by a shameful perjury ; but, in order to gain the blessing of heaven upon his arms, he caused it to be proclaimed that any soldier would be punished with death who should carry off so much as a blade of grass from the territory of Tours without paying for it, this country being under the immediate protection of St. Martin. The church, at that time, did not hesitate between the two kinds of merit — liberality toward monks, or probity. St. Gregory of Tours assures us that the march of Clovis was constantly directed and aided by miracles. The perpetual chorus of monks,—the *Psallentium*, who night and day sang psalms in the church of Tours, announced his victory by a prophecy. A fawn guided his passage across the waters of the Vienne ; a column of fire led his army on to Poitiers. At the distance of ten leagues from this city, Clovis encountered the Visigoths, commanded by Alaric II. He vanquished them in the plains of Vouglé (A.D. 507) ; their king was killed, and their whole army routed. The greater part of the territory of the Visigoths, between the Loire and the Pyrenees, was ravaged by the Franks, who spent a considerable time in conquering these provinces ; but during a four years' war, of which we have no details, they lost a part of what they had gained, and at the end of the reign of Clovis, in 511, his authority was acknowledged by little more than the half of Aquitaine.

The other Frankic kings could certainly no longer be considered as the equals of Clovis ; some of them had, indeed, fought by his side, but not one had discovered the talents of a great general, or a great poli-



tician. All of them had given themselves up to that effeminacy which so rapidly corrupts uncivilised man in affluence. Nevertheless, Clovis still regarded them as rivals; he feared the inconstancy of the people, who might at some future time seek among the other kings a protector against himself; and he dreaded the development of talents dangerous to his power in them or their children, or the comparison that might be made between their mildness and his own cruelty. He therefore came to the resolution of getting rid of them, and began with Siegebert, king of the Ripuarians, his companion in arms, who reigned at Cologne. In the year 509, he persuaded Chlodéric, the son of this unfortunate king, who had accompanied him in his war against the Visigoths, to assassinate his father; promising that he would afterwards assist him to reap the fruits of his parricide. The crime was committed; but Clovis made no attempt to screen the perpetrator, whom he caused to be assassinated in his turn; and immediately assembled the Ripuarians, who raised him upon a shield and proclaimed him their king. Shortly after, Clovis laid snares for Cararic, who reigned at Terouane. Having obtained possession of his person, he compelled him and his son to assume holy orders, after which he cut off both their heads. He seduced the *Leudes* of Ragnacar, who reigned at Cambray, by presents; and having commanded him and his brother to be brought before him in chains; "Art thou not ashamed," said he, "of disgracing our descent by allowing thyself to be thus manacled? thou oughtest to have died honourably." Then raising his arm, with one blow of his axe he cut off his head. "And as for thee," said he to the brother of Ragnacar, "hadst thou defended thy brother, thou wouldst not now be a captive with him." And immediately, by a mortal blow, he laid him prostrate in his turn. He also procured the death of several other long-haired kings who reigned over smaller tribes; then pretending

to repent of his barbarity, he offered his protection to all those who had escaped the massacre. He hoped thus to discover any of his relations whose lives might have been preserved, that he might rid himself of them also: but they had all perished, and his work was accomplished. So says St. Gregory, from whom we have borrowed the history of all these horrors; and whose sentiments, even better than his narrative, pourtray the spirit of the age he lived in. "Thus did God every day cause some among his enemies to fall into his hands, and increased the limits of his kingdom; because he walked with an upright heart before the Lord, and did that which was pleasing in his sight. (b. ii. c. 40.)

There can be no doubt that, by the larger part of the clergy of Gaul, Clovis was considered a saint. His success was attributed to a succession of miracles, which enabled him to lay the foundation of the French monarchy: one of these, more famous than the rest, has been commemorated ever since, at the consecration of the kings of France. It was asserted that a phial, called *La Sainte Ampoule*, was brought from heaven by a white dove to St. Remi, and contained the holy oil with which he was to anoint the king. This story, however, did not gain much credit until the ninth century. Nothing could exceed the respect and deference which Clovis testified on all occasions for the clergy, in return for the zeal with which they espoused his cause. We learn, from letters which have been preserved in the collection of the councils, that, in every country which was the seat of war, he had taken under his special protection not only the persons and property of bishops and priests, but even of their mistresses and their children. He had freed the property of the church from every kind of tax, and had consulted the ecclesiastical council upon the administration of his kingdom.

We should fall into a great error, if we compared this administration with any of those which exist in mo-

dern monarchies. Clovis reigned without any ministry, or civil establishment: he was not the king of Gaul, but king of the Franks who dwelt in Gaul. He was the captain of a sovereign army, both by choice and by inheritance; for, on the one hand, none but a descendant of Merovæus would have been exalted by the soldiers to this high dignity; and, on the other, they would not have entrusted their lives and fortunes to any but the most able and fortunate of the royal line. If Clovis had appeared not to justify their choice, his head would soon have fallen under the francisque, like those of the kings whom he had removed out of his way. This sovereign army, by whose aid he reigned, very much as the dey of Algiers reigned among the janissaries, never quitted arms for agriculture. They had not taken possession of the estates or the persons of the Gauls; for, by spreading themselves over a large territory, they would have been lost; they kept together, or at least their cantonments were always in the neighbourhood of Paris or of Soissons, according as the residence of Clovis was in one or the other of these cities. The soldiers were generally quartered upon the citizens: they lived in the enjoyment of luxury and brutal pleasures, such as barbarians could relish, until the wealth acquired in former expeditions was dissipated, and then urged their king to lead them against some new enemy. As the nation of Franks had never emigrated in a body, like that of the Burgundians and Visigoths, there were no families to be planted, no partitions of land to be made. By degrees only, as the veteran soldier retiring from service asked the grant of some uncultivated spot, the king was called upon to distribute land, and he had always more to give than he found claimants for. Often, indeed, the soldier helped himself, and, with the aid of his francisque, got rid of the proprietor whose dwelling or whose land he coveted: aware that, if he chanced to be pursued and condemned for this murder, the law required nothing but a mulct or wergeld of 100 sols of

gold (equal to 50*l.* sterling) for the murder of a Roman landholder.

The army, thus kept together, was summoned to deliberate not only in what was properly called the Champ de Mars, where the review took place at the commencement of spring, but on all public occasions, whether for peace or for war, — to make laws, or to pass sentence. The Romans were not admitted to these assemblies; they had no part in the sovereignty; but they had all the resources of court intrigue and flattery; all the places of finance or of correspondence, in which their education and literary acquirements were indispensable; and all offices in the ecclesiastical hierarchy: in each of these different careers they not only preserved, but very often augmented, the fortune they had received from their fathers, and their credit increased so much, that before long they enjoyed the special favour and confidence of the Frankic kings.

The towns continued to be governed by the Roman law, with their *curiæ*, or municipalities. To all those places, however, which had put themselves under his protection, Clovis sent a Frankic officer called *Graf*, or *Grafio*, answering pretty nearly to the Roman *Comes*. He superintended the municipality, collected certain royal dues, and presided over the partial assemblies of the Franks, — the courts where justice was administered when any troop of Franks was settled in a town.

In the rural districts the people remained slaves, as they were before the conquest. They laboured for the proprietor of the estate upon which they happened to live, whether he were Frank or Roman. War had ruined many citizens, and greatly augmented the number of captives: the common lot of prisoners was slavery; and a warlike expedition, crowned with brilliant success, was often the cause of transporting from the banks of the Rhone to those of the Seine whole droves of unhappy beings destined to work for any masters who might become their purchasers.

“After having done all these things,” continues Gregory of Tours, “Clovis died at Paris on the 5th of November, 511. He was buried in the church of the Holy Apostles, now called Ste. G  n  vi  ve ; which, in concert with queen Chlotilde, he had founded. He had reigned in all thirty years,—five since the battle of Vougl   ; and had completed the forty-fifth year of his age.”

## CHAP. IX.

COURSE OF BARBARIC INVASION FROM EAST TO WEST.—THE EASTERN EMPIRE, BY MERE GOOD FORTUNE, SURVIVES THE WESTERN. — EMPERORS OF THE EAST. — PERSIAN KINGS. — OSTROGOTHS. — THEIR KING DIETRICH, COMMONLY CALLED THEODORIC ; HIS EDUCATION AT THE COURT OF ZENO. — HIS CONQUEST OF ITALY. — HIS WISDOM AND MODERATION. — RESTORED PROSPERITY OF ITALY UNDER HIS RULE.—RELIGIOUS TOLERATION. — EXTENT OF HIS TERRITORY. — LETTERS OF HIS SECRETARY CASSIODORUS. — HIS WAR WITH CLOVIS. — HIS DEATH. — HIS UNWORTHY SUCCESSORS. — AGGRANDISEMENT OF THE FRANKS, THE MOST BARBAROUS AND THE MOST POWERFUL OF THE GERMAN NATIONS. — INCORPORATION OF OTHER TRIBES WITH THEM. — CONQUEST OF THE THURINGIANS. — REIGNS OF THE FOUR SONS OF CLOVIS ; THIERRY, CHLOTHAIRE, CHILDEBERT, AND THEODEBERT. — CONQUEST OF BURGUNDY.—GONDEBALD. — ATROCITIES OF THE FRANKIC KINGS. — DEATH OF CHLOTHAIRE. — A. D. 493—561.

THE torrent of barbaric invasion had rolled its waves from the East to the West : it had received its first impulse in Scythia, whence it had followed the shores of the Black Sea, and laid waste that enormous Illyrian isthmus, on the coast of which the new city of Constantine was built. Almost all the tribes which had conquered the West, had previously vented their fury upon the empire of the East : Goths of every denomination, Vandals, Alans, and Huns : nevertheless, the Eastern empire survived the tempest, while that of the West perished in it. The former was certainly not more warlike than the latter, nor better governed, nor more peopled, nor more wealthy ; it had no glorious recollections of the past to recall, and it contained no sparks of ancient patriotism which a virtuous administration might have rekindled. The senate of Constantinople, an imperfect copy of that of Rome, was always despicable and

timid. The character of the great was as servile as that of the people. The emperors assumed the haughty language of despotism, and though they professed Christianity, they continued to accept worship offered to them as divinities. The ambassadors of Theodosius II. engaged in a violent dispute with the ministers of Attila, at the very time when they were about to supplicate for peace at the feet of that monarch, declaring that it was impious to compare Attila, who was only a man, with their emperor Theodosius, who was a god. If we compare the Greeks of the fifth century, who maintained their existence, with the Romans, who forfeited theirs, we shall find them to have been superior neither in talents, nor in virtue, nor in energy, but simply more fortunate.

After the extinction of the race of the great Theodosius (A. D. 450), the throne of Constantinople was occupied, during a period of seventy-seven years, by five emperors, down to the time of Justinian:—Marcian (A. D. 450—457); Leo, till 474; Zeno, till 491; Anastasius, till 518; and Justin, till 527. These were almost all men advanced in age, equally feeble in mind and in body, and raised to the throne by women who governed in their names. History has but little to record of them. We have probably lost some contemporary writers, but the little we know of these five reigns leaves us no reason to regret that we do not know more. Thrace and the European part of the empire were exposed to frequent ravages during these seventy-seven years; but the extensive provinces of Asia, Egypt, and the Greek islands suffered only from the vices of the government. These vast regions could scarcely be attacked, except from the frontier of the Euphrates; and as the government of the Sassanides, in Persia, was characterised by an equal degree of pusillanimity, the two empires remained at peace with one another. The kings of Persia, Ferouz, (A. D. 457—488); Balasch, 491; Xobad, 531, are only known to us by name; they were engaged in dangerous wars with the White Huns or Euthalites to the north and east of the Caspian Sea,



which left them no leisure to turn their arms against the Romans.

But in the mean time a new people started from the frontiers of the Eastern empire, to fall upon the provinces which had belonged to the empire of the West, and to effect another change in their condition. The conquest of Italy by the Ostrogoths was connected with the reigns of the emperors Zeno and Anastasius, and was partly the result of their suggestions.

Whilst a portion of the nation of the Goths, which had inhabited the western regions, and were called Visigoths (*Westgothen*), had boldly entered the territory of the empire, and had at length found an abode in part of Gaul and in Spain; the Goths of the East, or Ostrogoths (*Ostgothen*), still remained beyond the Danube. They had submitted to Attila, but as they had neither treasures nor cities to pillage, and nothing to offer to their new master but brave soldiers, they were soon incorporated into the Tartar's army, and honoured by the name of his subjects. Three brothers, who were kings amongst the Ostrogoths, Walamir, Theodemir, and Widimir, had followed Attila in his expeditions against Thrace, and afterwards against Gaul. After the death of the king of the Huns, they had no difficulty in recovering their independence. They occupied, at that time, the desolate plains of Pannonia (Austria and Hungary). The impulse they had received from the Huns, the wars in which they had been engaged, and the rapid marches they had effected across Europe, had induced them to abandon the arts of agriculture. The habits of indolence and prodigality which they had contracted in the rich provinces they had laid waste, unfitted them to resume a life of industry; so that, in the rich lands of Hungary, where the slightest cultivation is rewarded by the most abundant crops, a nation, less numerous than the population of any one of the cities they had destroyed there, or which exist there at the present time, was constantly in dread of famine. Their cupidity was goaded by their privations: the more they suffered, the more they oppressed the few wretched inhabitants who remained in

these vast regions: they destroyed the last remnants of the race, and after having consumed the substance of the husbandmen who were their subjects, they relapsed into their former misery.

Theodoric, the son of Theodemir, one of the three brothers, had been given to the emperor Zeno as a hostage, and brought up at Constantinople. The example of that great empire, which still enjoyed immense wealth, and exercised the most valuable of the arts, was not lost upon him. His mind, open to instruction, did not fail to profit by whatever was still to be learnt amongst the Romans in the arts of war and administration; he not choose, however, to submit to Greek pedagogues, but educated himself, and would not even be taught to write. About the year 475, he succeeded his father, and as his two uncles were already dead, he was then chief of the whole Ostrogothic nation. He hastened to rescue his countrymen from the miseries they were suffering in the deserts of Pannonia. He invaded the empire of the East, and terrified Zeno into a purchase of his friendship. He rendered many important services to the emperor in the revolts which troubled his reign; but afterwards, being provoked by some instance of bad faith, or urged by the mere inconstancy and impatience of his soldiers, he again turned his arms against the empire, and ravaged Thrace with a cruelty which has left a stain upon his memory. It was said that, in this expedition, the Goths cut off the right hands of the peasants they took prisoners, in order to prevent them from holding the handle of the plough.

Theodoric could not live in peace, and Zeno, his adversary, was at a loss for a pretext for terminating a war which he was unable to carry on. At this juncture, the king of the Ostrogoths proposed to the emperor of Byzantium a negotiation by which he should be authorised to conquer Italy, and to govern it according to the laws, if not in the dependence, of the empire. Zeno was delighted to deliver himself from so formidable an enemy at any price; he therefore abandoned Odoacer to

the arms of the Ostrogoths, and in the treaty which he finally concluded with the king his vassal, expressions were introduced sufficiently ambiguous to save the dignity of the empire, without compromising the independence of Theodoric. The army of the Ostrogoths, and with it the entire nation, left Thrace at the beginning of the campaign of 489, intending to cross Mœsia, Pannonia, and the Julian Alps, in order to enter Italy.

Wandering tribes of Bulgarians, Gepidæ, and Sarmatians occupied these regions, which had once been opulent and populous. The Ostrogoths were sometimes obliged to maintain a running fight with them during a march of 700 miles; but in other parts they were joined by numerous adventurers, attracted by the fame of Theodoric to serve under his banner. When this formidable army descended the Alps of Friuli, Odoacer showed himself to be nowise inferior to his reputation for activity, skill, and bravery. He defended Italy better than it had been defended for ages; but after having lost three pitched battles, he was obliged to quit the open country, and to take refuge, with his most faithful partisans, in the fortress of Ravenna, where he stood a siege of three years. He was at length obliged to surrender, on the 5th of March, 493; the conditions he obtained were honourable and advantageous, but he soon learned that good faith in treaties was a virtue scarcely known amongst barbarians. The chiefs themselves rarely hesitated between their interests and their engagements, at a time when public opinion was without force, and public morality without principle. Theodoric, who may be looked upon as the most loyal and the most virtuous of these barbarian conquerors, caused Odoacer to be assassinated at the close of a banquet of reconciliation.

The king of the Ostrogoths, when he had conquered Italy, soon rendered himself master of the territory lying between the Danube and the Alps, which formed the outworks of the country he governed. He also obtained from the Vandals the restitution of Sicily, by

the terror of his name alone. He then proceeded to establish the wisest and most equitable institutions which any northern conqueror had ever granted to the conquered countries of the south. Instead of oppressing one people by means of the other, he strove to hold the balance fairly between them, and to preserve, or even to augment, the distinct privileges of each. He consolidated the entire structure of the Germanic liberties of the Goths; their popular judicial proceedings; their laws of Scandinavian origin; their institutions, at once civil and military, which assembled the citizens of the same districts, to deliberate or to judge in time of peace, and to take the field together in time of war. He confided the defence of the state to them exclusively, and towards the close of his life he went so far as to prohibit the Romans from wearing arms, (which they showed little eagerness to use,) and to allow them only to the barbarians. At the same time, he attempted to introduce the practice of agriculture among the Ostrogoths, by giving them lands, which they held on the ancient German tenure of military service. There were deserted estates in Italy, at that time, sufficient to have maintained thirty or forty thousand new families, and it is not to be doubted that Theodoric had brought as many with him; but these warriors had so far lost the habit of labour, that they could not submit to the task of bringing waste lands into cultivation: they were therefore allowed to choose out of the estates of the Romans, with the restriction, that no Roman citizen was to lose more than the third of his inheritance. It is also possible (for the expressions of Procopius on this head are somewhat ambiguous) that he imposed on the Roman husbandman the obligation of handing over to his barbarian master one-third of his crop; in which case we must ascribe to Theodoric the merit of having restored that system of partiarly or *métayer* husbandry to which Italy owes the prosperity of its agricultural population. As legislator, he made great efforts to unite in the Ostrogoth the domestic habits of the cultivator,

with the exercises and discipline of the soldier. His wish was to instruct his subjects in the arts, but not in the science or literature of the Romans, "for," said he, "he who has trembled at the rod of a tutor, will always tremble at the sight of a sword."

Theodoric indulged his Roman subjects in what they called their liberties; that is to say, the names of the republic, the senate, the consuls, and the magistracy; in their laws, language, and dress. He was sufficiently acquainted with the constitution of the empire, to perceive the great advantages he might derive from this state of things. The Romans would pay taxes, whilst the Goths would remain free from contributions; and he could not fail to discern the security he might gain from their settled obedience, and their great superiority over the Goths in the science of administration, in foreign correspondence, and in diplomacy. With the aid of Roman industry, fostered by the protection of just laws, and by the activity of a great mind, he worked some ancient gold and iron mines in Pannonia and Istria; he encouraged improvements in agriculture; he commenced the draining of the Pontine Marshes; restored the spirit of commerce and manufactures, and re-established the imperial posts, which were then exclusively destined to the convenience of the government, and of such as could obtain gratuitous orders for horses. In the year 500, during a visit he made to the city of Rome, where he received the compliments of the senate and the people, he assigned an annual revenue for the preservation of the Roman monuments from the depredations of builders, who already looked upon them as quarries which were to furnish materials for new edifices. He even reestablished, on a less lavish, but still on an expensive scale, the distributions of food to the Roman people, and those public sports which were not less dear to them than bread. He did not, however, take up his residence in the ancient capital, but divided his time between Ravenna, the most important fortress of his kingdom, his great arsenal and storehouse, and Verona, the city

of his choice, and that from which he was best enabled to provide for the defence of Italy. Thence it is, that in the *Nibelungen Lied*, the most ancient German poem, he is designated as Dietrich von Berne, which must be translated Theodoric of Verona, since Bern was not then in existence. Although he had been brought up in the Arian faith, Theodoric granted perfect toleration to the catholics, and even acceded to the wishes of their clergy, in forbidding any but the catholic religion amongst his conquered subjects. He distributed rewards and benefices to the clergy with such judgment and address, that they remained obedient and faithful to him till nearly the close of his life. He had intended to restore the glory of the Roman senate, and to attach it to his monarchy: his success was complete at the beginning of his reign, but the men whom he imagined he had secured, eluded him towards the end of it. The bishops and senators, deceived by the attentions he paid them, thought themselves more important and more formidable than they really were. The senators were still distinguished by their immense wealth; they dwelt upon the antiquity of their race, with a degree of pride which seemed to increase as the chances of raising its dignity by illustrious actions diminished. They still believed themselves to be ancient Romans, not only the descendants, but the equals, of the masters of the world: they dreamed of liberty without equality, public strength, or courage; and they entered into obscure conspiracies to restore, not the republic, but the empire. Theodoric, who had become irritable by prosperity and suspicious by age, punished these men, whom he accused of treacherous plans and intentions, more perhaps on suspicion than on any proof of real guilt. The end of his reign was sullied by the condemnation of Boethius and Symmachus, both of whom were senators, men of consular dignity, and eminently fitted to do honour to the last age of Rome. Boethius languished for a long time in his prison at Pavia; before he perished by a cruel death, he composed his work, “*De Consolatione*

Philosophiæ," which is still read with pleasure. It is said that Theodoric, exasperated by the persecution of the Arians at Constantinople, was about to set on foot a persecution of the catholics in Italy, when he died, on the 30th of August, 526.

During a reign of thirty-three years Theodoric carried on several successful wars, by means of his generals: he repelled the attacks of the Greeks, of various barbaric tribes from the Danube, of the Burgundians, and of the Franks. He was, however, less solicitous for the extension of his monarchy by conquest, than for its internal prosperity. The population of his kingdom rapidly increased, thanks to the long peace it enjoyed, to the wise laws which he had promulgated, and to the immense resources of a country which had been thus regenerated by the barbarians, and in which every kind of labour ensured an ample recompence. At the close of his reign the nation of the Ostrogoths was computed to possess 200,000 men capable of bearing arms, which supposes a total population of nearly 1,000,000; we must not, however, forget that it had been recruited by the soldiers and adventurers of all the barbarous nations who flocked to share the riches and the glory with which Theodoric loaded it. It then occupied not only Sicily and Italy, but the provinces of Rhætia and Noricum to the Danube, Istria on the other side the Adriatic, and the south of Gaul to the Rhone. We have no positive information as to the Roman population of these territories at the same time, but there is reason to believe that it was also considerably increased.

The negotiations of Theodoric extended throughout Germany, and even to Sweden, whence his countrymen originally came, and whence he constantly received fresh emigrants. The voluminous collection of the letters of his secretary Cassiodorus has been preserved; and although the truth often lies hid under the pompous style, cumbrous metaphors, or pedantic erudition of that rhetorician, these twelve books furnish us with many precious documents, relating to the internal ad-



ministration of the country, the manners of the age, and the diplomatic relations of the new states : it is worthy of note that the Latin language was employed in these last communications by nations who did not understand it themselves. We find letters addressed by Cassiodorus in the name of Theodoric to the kings of the Warnes, of the Heruli, and of the Thuringians, who were all completely barbarous, and who lived beyond the Danube, begging them to interest themselves, as well as the king of the Burgundians, in the defence of his son-in-law Alaric II. against Clovis. These kings had been compelled to acknowledge the advantages of letters, and of the means of communication which they afforded to men separated by enormous distances, although united by the same interests ; but, as their language had no alphabet, and neither they nor any one else could write it, they took Roman slaves as secretaries, and frequently maintained a correspondence in a language which was equally unknown to both parties.

Theodoric, who had obliged the Burgundians to cede a great portion of Provence and the town of Arles, in which he had established a prefect of Gaul in imitation of the prefecture under the empire, had endeavoured to protect his son-in-law Alaric II., king of the Visigoths in Spain and Aquitaine, whose territories adjoined his own at the mouth of the Rhone. Deceived as much as his young ally, by the oaths of Clovis, he was unable to prevent the battle of Vouglé and the ruin of the Visigoths in Aquitaine, but he lost no time in sending them assistance. A natural son of Alaric, who was of age to bear arms, had been placed upon the throne during the infancy of Amalaric, his legitimate son by the daughter of Theodoric ; however valid this motive might appear to the nation, it did not satisfy the king of the Ostrogoths, who immediately caused his grandson to be crowned, and assumed the government of Spain and of the south of France as his guardian. Amalaric in the meanwhile established his residence at

Narbonne ; the lustre of his court, and of the officers who attended him, served to remind the Visigoths that they were still an independent nation ; while the continued advantages with which they carried on a border war against the Franks, attached them to the powerful protector who maintained the glory of their monarchy.

If Theodoric had had a son to whom he might have transmitted the dominion over so large a portion of Europe, the Goths would probably have had the honour of restoring the empire of the West ; but fortune, who had conferred more true greatness on this prince than on any other barbaric monarch, refused him a male heir, and had granted him only two daughters. He died on the 30th of August, 526, and his reign passed like a brilliant meteor, which disappears without exercising any permanent influence on the seasons. The two nations of the Visigoths and Ostrogoths, which he had united, were again divided at his death. Amalaric, who was then twenty-five or twenty-six years old, remained at Narbonne, whence he governed Spain, and that part of Gaul which lies between the Rhone, the Loth, and the Pyrenees. Athalaric, the grandson of Theodoric, then only four or five years old, remained at Ravenna under the guardianship of his mother Amalasonta, at the head of the Ostrogoths in Italy and Provence.

As corruption advances with more rapid strides among barbarians than among civilised nations, so also does their ruin. Their virtues are owing to position rather than to principle : they are sober, valiant and active, because they are poor and hardy from their infancy. Physical pleasure is all that wealth can give them ; they are unable to share the intellectual enjoyments of civilised men, so that, to them, opulence is the source of every vice. The plan of this work does not compel us to enter into these infamous details ; suffice it to say, that from the death of the great Theodoric, to the reign of Athanagild, who transferred the seat of monarchy to Toledo (A.D. 526-554), four kings successively occupied the throne : Amalaric reigned from 526 to

531, Thendis died in 548, Thendisdi in 549, and Agila in 554. Each was assassinated by the hand of his successor. In Italy seven kings of the Ostrogoths succeeded Theodoric, till the destruction of that monarchy by Belisarius in 554: Athalaric reigned from 526 to 534, Theodatus to 536, Vitiges to 540, Hildebald 541, Evaria 541, Totila 552, and Teja 554. The fate of these monarchs was scarcely less tragical than that of their contemporaries in Gaul: but we shall have occasion to recur to them, in speaking of the conquests of Justinian, in a subsequent chapter. We shall at the same time witness the fall of the Vandals in Africa: we are about to record that of the Burgundians in Gaul. No ray of light enables us as yet to discern the history of the internal revolutions of Great Britain or of Germany, so that, after the death of Theodoric, all the interest of the West centers in the history of the Franks.

The sudden rise of the monarchy of the Franks is the more remarkable, as, from the death of Clovis, that nation was distinguished neither by the virtues or talents of its chiefs, nor by its own merits. At the time of the conquest of Gaul, the Franks were the most barbarous of the barbarians, and they long remained so: they manifested an extreme contempt for the people they had subdued, and treated them with excessive rigour. The Visigoths had adopted a pretty copious selection from the code of Theodosius (which was then the law of the empire) as the law of their monarchy: the Ostrogoths had promulgated laws of their own, which were not entirely dissimilar from those of the Roman republic, and which attested the importance they attached to legal science, and to the administration of justice. The Burgundians, more rude than the Goths, had retained their national laws, which were certainly less polished than the preceding codes, but equitable in spirit, and equally just to the conquerors and the conquered. The Franks published their laws, which were the most barbarous of all. The penal code of the Germanic nations reduced itself to a scale of fines: every

offence might be atoned for by a pecuniary compensation: *wehrgeld* was the money of defence, *wiedergeld* the money of compensation. But the Franks, both Salian and Ripuan, were the only people who valued the blood of a Roman at half, or even less than half, the value of the blood of a barbarian. Murder and every other crime was punished in the same proportion. This public insult offered by the legislature to the conquered people, was of a piece with the rest of their conduct. They despised the learning of the Latins, as well as their language, their arts, and their sciences: as governors, the Franks were violent, brutal, and pitiless: their respect for the priests alone contributed to render their yoke supportable. Their high veneration for the church, and their rigorous orthodoxy, which was the more easily preserved as they were entirely ignorant of the disputes and controversies which had arisen on matters of faith, induced the clergy to look upon them as their firmest allies. They were ever ready to detest, to combat, and to pillage the Arians, without listening to their arguments. The bishops, in their turn, were not very strict in enforcing the moral obligations of religion: they shut their eyes upon violence, murder, and licentiousness; they even seem to have publicly authorised polygamy, and they preached the divine right of kings, and the duty of passive obedience. The Franks were, however, brave, numerous,—for their population had increased rapidly in Gaul,—well armed, tolerably well versed in the ancient Roman discipline, from their long service in the imperial armies, and almost always victorious in battle. The ties that united them were so lax, their obedience to the king and to the law so voluntary, their freedom from pecuniary and social obligations so complete, that no barbarian thought he forfeited any of his national privileges by entering into their community. On the other hand, the Franks, who, at their first establishment on the other side the Rhine, had been composed of a confederation of several small nations, were familiar with the idea of admitting new

confederates: all they asked of their associates was to march under the same standard in time of war: they did not interfere with their internal constitution; they appointed no governor; they did not dismiss their dukes or hereditary kings, and, without claiming from them forced subsidies of men or of money, they admitted them to participation in their glory and their power. In this manner the whole of Germany, without having been conquered, became engaged in the Frankic confederation in the course of that half century which comprised the reigns of the four sons of Clovis. (A. D. 511—561.)

The kingdom of Clovis, which had been founded by soldiers of fortune in some of the towns of Belgium, was bounded by the Rhine. His tribe consisted of Salians, and, perhaps, of Sicambrians also, though it is not at all certain that other Salians, independent of Clovis, did not remain in their former settlements on the right bank of the Rhine. The Chauci, the Cherusci, and the Chamavi, are not mentioned in the history of his reign, any more than the other ancient Franks who belonged to the primitive confederation. They had all retained their independence in a part of Germany which is still called Frankenland (Franconia), after them; but in the following half century they gladly entered into a new confederation, which, without abridging their rights, promised to ensure them many new advantages. Beyond the Franks of the Rhine, and of Franconia, dwelt the Frisons on the shores of the ocean, and the Saxons at the mouth of the Elbe: both these nations began to call themselves Franks, or at least to march with the Frankic armies, at the beginning of the sixth century. The Alemanni, or Swabians, from the sources of the Rhine, and the Bavarians on the banks of the Danube, contracted the same pacific engagements, without in any way changing their respective institutions; except that their sovereigns probably abandoned the title of king to Clovis, and assumed that of duke. The Thuringians alone were subdued by force of arms. They had laid the foundations of a powerful monarchy

from the banks of the Elbe and the Unstrut to those of the Neckar ; they had allied themselves with the Varnes and the Heruli ; and they had a long rivalry of glory to decide, as well as a long list of grievances to redress, with the Franks. The Thuringian war is believed to have occurred in the years 528 and 530. The sons of Clovis took advantage of the dissensions of its chiefs, and of those royal fratricides which stain the annals of all the monarchies of that age, to attack this nation. Three brothers governed the Thuringians—Baderic, Hermanfrid, and Berthar ; they were recent converts to Christianity, and Hermanfrid had married a niece of the great Theodoric, king of Italy. This princess, who was accustomed to the Gothic order of succession according to primogeniture, upbraided her husband for consenting to occupy a divided throne. Hermanfrid came one day into the banquet hall, where he found the table partly uncovered : when he asked his wife the cause, she said, “ You complain of having only half a table, and you submit quietly to having only half a kingdom.” Hermanfrid felt this reproach : to satisfy his wife, he surprised and assassinated his brother Berthar : he afterwards concerted the death of Baderic with Thierry, one of the sons of Clovis ; but as he refused to pay this prince the recompence he had promised, war was declared, in which Hermanfrid perished with his whole family ; not, however, in battle, but by treachery, in a conference with his enemy.

We have advanced in this history without mentioning the names of the new kings of the Franks ; it is, indeed, repulsive to dwell upon the lives of princes whose annals are one tissue of perfidy and of crime. Clovis was succeeded by his four sons — Thierry, Chlodimir, Childebert, and Chlothaire, the eldest of whom was twenty-five, the youngest thirteen or fourteen years old. All four were distinguished by their regal length of hair, and all bore the title of king, but they lived in four distinct though not very distant towns,—Paris, Orleans, Soissons, and Metz,—in order to enjoy the pleasures of the throne

without restraint, and to be more secure from the poison or the dagger each dreaded from the other. The monarchy, however, was not divided, though the royalty was ; the Franks still formed one nation. In time of peace the kings took so little part in the government, that the division of the royal power was unperceived by their subjects ; in war each had his own *leudes* or warriors, immediately depending upon his personal favour ; while, in their more important expeditions, the Franks followed the king in whom they had the greatest confidence. The provinces were divided amongst the brothers, but in so strange a manner, that it is evident the convenience of government was not the object they had in view. The division applied more to the tribute of the Roman towns, and to the productions of the soil, than to the territory itself : each prince chose to have his share in the vines and olives of the south, as well as in the forest or pasture lands of the north ; and their possessions were so intermingled throughout Gaul, that it was impossible to travel for ten leagues without passing a frontier.

The lives of the four brothers were not of equal duration. Thierry, the eldest, who was not a son of Chlotilde, but of a concubine or pagan mistress of Clovis, died in 534 ; he was succeeded by his son Theodebert, who died in 547, and was followed by Theodebald, his son, who died in 553 without issue. Chlodomir, the second of the Frankic kings, was slain in the Burgundian war in 526. Childebert, the third, died in 558 ; and Chlothaire, who survived his brothers, inherited all their possessions, and reigned over the Franks till 561. It would be difficult and useless to fix this list of deaths in the memory : the government of the four sons of Clovis properly forms but one reign, which lasted from 511 to 561. These four princes laid snares for each other, but they never broke out into open hostility. We shall shortly see that they were far from sparing of the blood of their kindred, but they probably thought that the Franks would refuse to make war upon each other.



They had but few opportunities of displaying their military talents: they, however, made some warlike expeditions; Thierry and Chlothaire in Thuringia, Childbert in Narbonnensian Gaul, and Theodebert in Italy; they thus enriched their soldiers with booty, and kept up the reputation of the valour of their nation.

The bravery of the Franks was more frequently called into action in numerous voluntary expeditions, undertaken by soldiers of fortune under captains of their own choice, in order to share the spoils of Italy, which was at that time the theatre of war between Belisarius, the general of Justinian, and the Ostrogoths. These partial expeditions would have had no consequences more important than the success, or the untimely death, of individual warriors, had not the Ostrogoths surrendered the occupation of Provence, by which means that important part of Gaul was added to the empire of the Franks. A still more brilliant acquisition was that of Burgundy, which was the consequence of a national war, and of a family quarrel.

Gondebald, king of the Burgundians, who had massacred his three brothers, continued to reign alone over that nation from the year 500 to 516. St. Avitus, archbishop of Vienne, his subject, exhorted him, in a letter which is still extant, to calm his remorse for this fratricide; he conjured him "to weep no longer with such ineffable piety the death of his brothers, since it was the good fortune of the kingdom which diminished the number of persons invested with royal authority, and preserved to the world such only as were necessary to rule it." Gondebald, from the time of the commission of this crime, governed with great wisdom and justice: he protected his Roman subjects, and insured the future observance of their rights. When he died, in 516, his son Sigismund succeeded him, after having embraced the orthodox faith, and induced the majority of his subjects to join in his conversion.

Sigismund was canonised by the Romish church, and is to this day revered as a saint. He was the founder

of the convent of St. Maurice in the Valais, which he endowed with immense revenues : we know nothing of what occurred during his reign of eight years, except this monastic institution, and the precipitation with which he caused his brother Siegeric to be strangled in his sleep, on false suspicions. He lived in peace, fully occupied with what were then called good works, such as acts of penitence, and munificent almsgivings to the monks. St. Chlotilde, the widow of Clovis, who had also retired from the world to devote herself exclusively to the exercises of religion at the tomb of St. Martin at Tours, came to Paris in the year 523, to meet her three sons ; and, according to the holy bishop, Gregory of Tours, she addressed them to the following effect :—“ I exhort you, my dear children, to live so that I may never repent the tenderness with which I have brought you up ; to resent with indignation the injury which I received thirty-three years ago, and to avenge, with unflinching constancy, the death of my parents.” The three sons swore to perform the injunctions of their mother : they attacked the Burgundians, defeated them in battle, secured the person of St. Sigismund, who had already assumed the monastic garb, and was retiring to the convent of St. Maurice : after keeping him some time prisoner, Chlodimir caused him to be thrown into a well near Orleans, with his wife and his two children. A brother of Sigismund, called Godemar, rallied the fugitive Burgundians, put himself at their head, and repelled the Franks. Chlodimir, who renewed the attack in 524, was killed at the battle of Veserruce. The Franks offered to treat with the Burgundians, and Godemar was allowed to reign in peace for eight years ; but in 532 he was again assailed, taken prisoner, and treated as captive kings were treated at that time : the whole of Burgundy was subdued, and thenceforth the Burgundians marched under the standard of the Franks, though they retained their own laws and magistracy.

The revenge of St. Chlotilde was at length accomplished

on the children and grandchildren of her enemies ; but her satisfaction was embittered. Chlodomir was killed ; and his brother, Chlothaire, though he had already two wives, married his brother's widow, named Gondioca, and sent his three infant children to be brought up by St. Chlotilde. He feared, however, lest these sons of Chlodomir should, at some future time, assert their claim to their father's inheritance ; and accordingly summoned his brother Childebert to Paris, to consult with him on their common interests. They desired their mother to send the three children to them, in order that they might be shown to the people, and proclaimed kings. Chlotilde accordingly sent them with a numerous train of officers, and of young pages who were brought up with them. Arcadius, a senator of Auvergne, and a confidential agent of Childebert, shortly afterwards returned to her with a pair of scissars and a drawn sword, calling upon her to decide the fate of her grandchildren : in a paroxysm of indignation and despair, Chlotilde exclaimed, that " she had rather they should perish, than be shorn and buried alive in a cloister." This answer was construed into assent by her two sons : Chlothaire seized the eldest of the princes, then about ten years old, by the arm, threw him down, and plunged a dagger into his side : the younger child then fell at the feet of Childebert and implored mercy : Childebert, touched by his supplications, with tears in his eyes intreated his brother to stay his hand ; but Chlothaire exclaimed furiously, " thou hast urged me on, and now thou desertest me ; give up the boy, or perish in his stead ;" on which Childebert flung the suppliant down, and Chlothaire slew him on the ground. All the pages and attendants were massacred at the same time, and Childebert divided the inheritance of Chlodomir with his surviving brother. Chlodoald, the youngest of these unhappy children, escaped the pursuit of his uncles : for a long time he remained in concealment ; when he was grown up he cut off his hair with his own hands, and assumed the monkish garb : returning to France after the death of Chlothaire,

he built the monastery of St. Cloud, which bears his name.

After recording the crimes of the early kings of the Franks, we long to hear that speedy vengeance overtook them, but this was too rarely the case. Nations are quickly chastised for their vices and their crimes; for them, morality is identical with good policy; but individuals, of whose existence we see but the beginning, await a different retribution. The powerful frequently find means to hush the upbraidings of conscience, of public opinion, and of posterity. Childebert and Chlothaire had risen above the scruples of remorse; they were assisted in recovering their tranquillity of mind by the assurances of the monks, whom they loaded with wealth. "When," says Chlothaire in the diploma which was given to the convent of Riom in 516, "we listen with a devout soul to the supplications of our priests, as to what regards the advantage of the churches, we are certain that Jesus Christ will remunerate us for all the good we do them."\* Such was the Christianity which was taught to Chlothaire, and such the confidence in which he was educated, whilst his eyes were closed to the atrocity of the murders we have seen, and are yet to see; and whilst he was allowed to marry, at the same time, Rhadegunde, the daughter of the king of the Thuringians whom he had slain, Chemsene, the mother of his son Chramne, Gondioca, the widow of his brother Chlodomir, Wuttrade, the widow of his nephew Theodewald, Ingunde, and Aregunde. It should be mentioned that the bishops objected to his marriage with Wuttrade, and that he was obliged at the end of a few months to give her up to Gariwald duke of Bavaria; but as to the other marriages, the bishop of Tours relates them in the language of the Old Testament:—

"Chlothaire had already espoused Ingunde," says St. Gregory, and "he loved her alone, when she proffered a request to him, and said, 'My lord hath done with his

\* Diplom. tom. iv. p. 616.

servant that which hath seemed good to him, and hath called her to his bed, but now that the kindness of my lord and king be complete, let him listen to the prayer of his handmaiden. Choose, I pray thee, for Aregunde my sister, his servant, a man wise and rich, so that I be not humbled by her alliance, but exalted on the contrary, and that I may serve my lord with greater faithfulness.' Chlothaire heard what she said, and as he was extremely sensual, he burned with love for Aregunde. He speedily repaired to the country-house where she dwelt, and took her to wife ; after this he returned to Ingunde and said, ' I have provided for that which thou hast sought of me ; thou hast asked a husband for thy sister both rich and wise, and I have found no one better than myself ; know then that I have married her, and that I would not have thee be displeased thereat.' Then Ingunde answered ; ' Let my lord do that which is good in his sight, so that his handmaid find favour in the eyes of her king.' "

The end of Chlothaire's career was worthy of its commencement : after having shared the throne with his brothers for forty-seven years, he survived the last of them three years. Childebert died at Paris in 558, leaving no son ; Chlothaire immediately drove his wife and two daughters from the country, and sought to wreak his revenge on his own son Chramne, who had attached himself to Childebert by choice. Chramne took refuge with the Britons in Armorica, a people who had refused to submit to the Franks, and who readily took up arms in defence of the young prince ; the Britons were however defeated, and Chramne again took to flight. " He had vessels ready upon the sea," continues Gregory of Tours, " but as he tarried to place his wife and his daughters in safety, the soldiers of his father came up with him, and cast him into chains. When this was told to king Chlothaire, he ordered his son to be burnt in fire, together with his wife and daughters : thereupon they were shut up in the hovel of a poor man ; Chramne was stretched out and bound

upon a bench, with a cloth taken from an altar (orarium), and the house was set on fire, so that he perished in it with his wife and daughters."

"Now when the king Chlothaire had reached the fiftieth year of his reign, he went to the gates of the shrine of St. Martin with very rich presents ; and when he came to Tours, at the tomb of that bishop, he confessed all the actions in which he had any negligence to reproach himself with ; he lifted up his voice and groaned exceedingly, begging the holy confessor to obtain the mercy of the Lord, and to efface by his intercession whatever might have been sinful in his conduct. After his return, he was hunting one day in the forest of Cuise, when he was attacked by a fever, so that he returned to his palace at Compiègne ; being cruelly tormented by the fever, he cried, ' What are we to think of this king of heaven, who kills the kings of earth in this wise ? ' But he expired in this suffering. His four sons carried his body in great pomp to Soissons, and interred it in the church of St. Médard : he died on the day after the anniversary of that on which his son Chramne had been put to death."

## CHAP. X.

THE REIGN OF JUSTINIAN, ILLUSTRATED BY TWO HISTORIANS, PROCOPIUS AND AGATHIAS, AND DISTINGUISHED FOR GREAT MEN. — CHARACTER OF JUSTINIAN. — HIS INTOLERANCE. — ABOLITION OF THE SCHOOLS OF ATHENS; OF THE CONSULATE AND THE SENATE OF ROME. — CONTRAST BETWEEN THE BRILLIANCY AND THE CALAMITY OF THIS PERIOD. — WARS WITH THE BULGARIANS, SLAVONIANS, AND PERSIANS. — PEACE WITH CHOSROES II. — KINGDOM OF THE VANDALS IN AFRICA, FROM THE DEATH OF GENSERIC. — AFRICAN WAR. — BELISARIUS. — TAKING OF CARTHAGE. — CONQUEST OF AFRICA. — RECALL OF BELISARIUS. — THE OSTROGOTHS IN ITALY, FROM THE DEATH OF THEODORIC. — AMALASONTA. — EXPEDITION OF BELISARIUS AGAINST THE OSTROGOTHS. — VITIGES. — ROME TAKEN AND RETAKEN. — CONDUCT OF JUSTINIAN TO BELISARIUS. — INCURSIONS OF THE FRANKS. — RECALL OF BELISARIUS FROM ITALY. — RUINOUS CONSEQUENCES. — SUCCESSES OF THE OSTROGOTHS UNDER TOTILA. — EXPEDITION OF BELISARIUS AGAINST HIM. — DEFEAT OF THE GOTHS BY NARSES. — LAST VICTORY OF BELISARIUS. — INGRATITUDE OF THE EMPEROR. — DEATH OF BOTH. — JUSTINIAN AS LAWGIVER. — A. D. 527—565.

IN the midst of the darkness through which we have groped our way; after having seen the lights of history die out in the East and in the West; after having lost sight of all the historians of Rome, and of the school of rhetoricians and philosophers which had been formed during the reigns of Constantine and of Julian, we are all at once surrounded by a flood of historic light, spreading from the East to the West, and showing how the face of things was changed, when the prince of legislators published that digest of laws which is still used in many of the tribunals of modern Europe. The reign of Justinian, from 527 to 565, is one of the most brilliant periods of the history of the lower empire. It has been celebrated by two Greek writers, Procopius and Agathias, the former of whom, espec-



ally, is worthy to tread in the footsteps of the fathers of Grecian history, whom he took for his models. One of the greatest men who ever adorned the annals of the world,—Belisarius, whose virtues and whose talents were alike strangers at the court of Byzantium, and inexplicable in the midst of the universal turpitude and crime,—wrenched from the barbarians both Africa, Sicily and Italy ; provinces in which the foundations of powerful monarchies had been laid, and which seemed to defy the contemptible attacks of the Greeks. A code of laws, acknowledged throughout western Europe, in countries which had never belonged to the empire, or which had long since thrown off its yoke, though rejected centuries ago by the nations for which it was specially designed, has survived that empire, and has obtained, in our days, the appellation of “written reason.” Monuments of art, worthy of admiration, began to rise in Constantinople and in the provinces, after the lapse of two centuries, during which construction had been utterly at a stand, and nations seemed solely intent upon destroying what existed. The reign of Justinian, from its length, its glory, and its disasters, may, on more than one account, be compared to the reign of Louis XIV. which exceeded it in length, and equalled it in glory and in disaster. The great emperor, like “the great king,” was handsome in his person, graceful and dignified in his manners, and impressed all who approached him with a sense of that majesty to which both of them so ardently aspired. Justinian displayed the same sagacity as Louis in choosing his ministers, and in employing them in the career most fitted to their talents. Belisarius, Narses, and many others, whose names, though less celebrated, are not less worthy of renown, gained victories for him which conferred upon the monarch the glory of a conqueror. John of Cappadocia, who was employed to regulate the finances, brought them into perfect order, at the same time that he carried to the highest perfection the art of draining the purse of the subject. Tribonian, to whom he

confided the task of legislation, brought to his service his prodigious erudition, his sagacious understanding, and his knowledge of jurisprudence, to which was united all the servility of a courtier, whose object it was to sanction despotism by law. The magnificence of the edifices built by Justinian, which are more remarkable for their splendour than for the purity of their style, exhausted his treasury ; and though these monuments still illustrate his memory, the erection of them was more disastrous to his people than war itself. The fortresses with which he covered his frontiers, and which he built on every side, at an immense expense, could not check the invasions of his enemies in his old age. Justinian was the protector of commerce. For the first time in the history of antiquity, we find a government paying some attention to the science of economy ; and though it is extremely doubtful whether the real wealth and happiness of his subjects were increased by the encouragement he gave to manufactures, it must be acknowledged that we owe to him the introduction of the silkworm, the cultivation of the mulberry-tree, and the fabric of silk, imported from China ; and that by his negotiations in Abyssinia and in Sogdiana, he attempted to open a new route for the commerce of India, and to render his subjects independent of Persia. Justinian, believing that kings are more enlightened in matters of faith than the common run of men, determined on establishing his creed throughout the empire. He persecuted all who differed from him, and thus deprived himself of the assistance of many millions of citizens, who took refuge with his enemies, and introduced the arts of Greece amongst them. His reign may be signalised as the fatal epoch at which several of the noblest institutions of antiquity were abolished. He shut the schools of Athens (A. D. 529), in which an uninterrupted succession of philosophers, supported by a public stipend, had taught the doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and Epicurus, ever since the time of the Antonines. They were, it is true, still attached to paganism,

and even to the arts of magic. In 541 he abolished the titular consulate of Rome, which was become an office of ruinous expense, from the magnificence of the games which those who held it thought themselves obliged to give to the people. These pageants frequently cost each candidate a sum of 80,000*l.* sterling. In a few years afterwards, (about 552), the senate of Rome also ceased to exist. The ancient capital of the world was taken and retaken five times during the reign of Justinian, each assault being marked by increased atrocity. It was now completely ruined, and the ancient senatorial families were so thinned by the sword, by want, and by capital punishments, that they no longer attempted to support the dignity of their ancient name.

The brilliant reign of Justinian proves, even more clearly than that of Louis XIV., that a period of glory is seldom one of happiness. Never did a man furnish more brilliant pictures to his panegyrists, who, as they looked but on one side of things, lavished their praises on his extensive conquests, his wise laws, his splendid court, his magnificent edifices, and even on the progress of the useful arts. Never did a man leave a more grievous reverse to be described by the historian, nor the recollection of calamities more general, or more destructive of the human race. Justinian conquered the kingdoms of the Vandals and of the Ostrogoths; but both these nations were in a manner annihilated by their defeat: and before he recovered a province, it was reduced to a desert by the excesses of his armies. He extended the limits of his empire; but he was unable to defend the territory he had received from his predecessors. Every one of the thirty-eight years of his reign was marked by an invasion of the barbarians; and it has been said, that reckoning those who fell by the sword, who perished from want, or were led into captivity, each invasion cost 200,000 subjects to the empire. Calamities, which human prudence is unable to resist, seemed to combine against the Romans, as if to compel them to expiate their ancient glory. Their

cities were overwhelmed by earthquakes, more frequent than at any other period of history. Antioch, the metropolis of Asia, was entirely destroyed, on the 20th of May, 526, at the very time when the inhabitants of the adjacent country were assembled to celebrate the festival of the Ascension ; and it is affirmed that 250,000 persons were crushed by the fall of its sumptuous edifices. This was the beginning of a scourge, which was renewed at short intervals till the end of that century. The plague was brought from Pelusium, in Egypt, in 542, and attacked the Roman world with such fury, that it did not finally disappear till 594 ; so that the very period which gave birth to so many monuments of greatness, may be looked back upon with horror, as that of the widest desolation and the most terrific mortality.

Justinian was born in 482 or 483, near Sophia, in modern Bulgaria, or ancient Dardania. He came of a family of common labourers. His uncle Justin, who had enlisted as a private soldier in the guards of the emperor Leo, rose by his valour alone from rank to rank, till he reached the highest dignity of the state. He obtained the purple on the 10th of July, 518, when he was already sixty-eight years of age ; but he had long since summoned to his counsels his nephew, to whom he intended to leave his inheritance, and whose talents and activity might sustain his declining years. Four months before his death, on the 1st of April, 527, Justinian was allowed to share the imperial dignity. He was then forty-five years old: he was well acquainted with the policy of his uncle's court ; but though the nephew of a successful soldier of fortune, he was personally unknown to the army, and unaccustomed to actual warfare. After he was seated upon the throne, his advancing years, the etiquette of the court of Byzantium, and the fears his courtiers expressed for his safety, kept him aloof from the army ; and though he made war for thirty-eight years, he never put himself at the head of his soldiers.

Justinian was, however, extremely ambitious of military fame, even from the commencement of his reign. The situation of the empire, the dangers which surrounded him, and the menacing attitude of the barbarians upon all his frontiers, made it his duty to adopt the most expeditious means of defence, by restoring the discipline of his troops, by encouraging a warlike spirit among his subjects, and especially by creating an active militia from among the population of his vast territories. The love of a military glory like this would have been no less honourable to the sovereign than advantageous to the subjects of the empire, but such was not the policy Justinian adopted. Like his predecessors, he strictly forbade his citizens to carry arms; and though some few, hoarded in private families, might escape the vigilance of domestic inquisition, every kind of military exercise was positively forbidden the people, by the timidity and jealousy of the emperor; so that, notwithstanding the immense extent of the empire and the dense population of the western provinces, levies of men were rendered almost impossible. The great generals of Justinian undertook their most brilliant expeditions with armies of no more than 20,000 men; and these troops consisted chiefly of enemies to the empire enlisted under its standard. The cavalry and the archers of Belisarius were composed of Scythians or Massagetes, and of Persians; the infantry of Heruli, Vandals, Goths, and a small number of Thracians, who were the only subjects of the empire that retained the slightest military ardour. The citizens and peasants were not only incapable of fighting for life or property in the open field; they dared not even defend the ramparts of cities, the fortresses which the emperor had constructed for them on all the frontiers, nor the long line of walls which covered the Thracian Chersonesus, Thermopylæ, or the isthmus of Corinth. The Bulgarians, who appear to be of Slavonic origin, with a mixture of Tartar blood, took up their abode in the valley of the Danube, where they

united themselves to other Slavonians who had always dwelt there, and who had bent, like a reed, beneath the waves of the inundation, and risen again when it had passed over them. These united tribes at length became sufficiently powerful to devastate the empire. They were distinguished neither by their arms, their discipline, nor their military virtues ; but they fearlessly crossed the Danube every year to make prisoners and carry off booty ; they frequently advanced 300 miles into the country, and Justinian looked upon it as a victory, when he succeeded in obliging them to retire with their plunder.

Another portion of the empire was threatened by a far more formidable enemy, who had at his disposal numerous armies, immense wealth, and almost all the arts of civilisation, though he made war with the atrocious ferocity of a barbarian. The great Chosroes Nushirran, king of Persia, was contemporary with Justinian, and his reign was even longer than that of the emperor (531—579). When he ascended the throne, hostilities had broken out between the two nations ; but his kingdom was enfeebled by civil wars, and by the inroads of the White Huns, so that its need of a peaceful and judicious government was not less urgent than that of the empire. In 531, Chosroes signed a treaty of peace with Justinian, which both monarchs called perpetual ; and the Greek emperor, instead of taking advantage of it to strengthen his frontiers against the frequent aggressions of his ancient foes, turned his arms to the conquest of distant provinces, which he could scarcely hope to defend.

The ambitious views of Justinian were first attracted to Africa. Genseric died on the 24th of January, 477, after a reign of thirty-seven years over Carthage. The crown of the Vandals had passed successively to Hunneric, who died in 484, to Gunthamond till 496, and to Thrasamond till 523 : these three monarchs were all sons of Genseric, and all zealous enemies of the catholic faith. They carried on the most cruel perse-

cutions in the name of the Arian faith: they are accused of having caused the tongues of a considerable number of bishops to be torn up by the roots; but we are assured by eye-witnesses (not of the punishment but of the miracle) that these prelates continued to preach with greater eloquence than before, without suffering the least inconvenience. In 523, Hilderic, the grandson of Genseric, succeeded his uncle Thrasamond; he recalled the exiled bishops, and during seven years the Roman subjects in Africa lived under a more paternal rule. The Vandals, however, soon regretted the tyranny which they were accustomed to exercise over the nations they had subdued. They accused their monarch of indolence and effeminacy, while they were themselves open to the charge of having too soon yielded to the enervating influence of those sultry regions; the wealth they had acquired by the sabre was dissipated without restraint and without shame; they were constantly surrounded by slaves, like the Mamelukes of our own times; and though their amusements were all of a martial kind, they delighted in the pomp rather than in the fatigue of warlike exercise. Gelimer, of the royal blood of the Vandals, embittered their resentment; he headed a conspiracy against Hilderic, threw that prince into a dungeon, and took possession of his throne.

The war of Africa was undertaken by Justinian under pretence of restoring the legitimate succession to the throne, and of delivering Hilderic from prison. The emperor was encouraged in his designs by the state of anarchy in which Africa was plunged. A lieutenant of Gelimer had raised the standard of revolt in Sardinia, and had caused himself to be crowned king: on the other hand, an African Roman had incited his countrymen of Tripoli, in the name of the Athanasian creed, and had raised the banner of the empire. Justinian was encouraged by the prophecies of the orthodox bishops, which all promised him success; and by putting



Belisarius at the head of the expedition, he adopted the means most likely to ensure it.

Belisarius, who was born among the peasants of Thrace, had begun his career in the guards of the emperor Justin. He had already distinguished himself in the Persian war, at a juncture of considerable difficulty ; after a defeat, for which he was not to blame, he displayed more ability than is usually shown in victory, and saved the army which was entrusted to him. He was about the same age as the emperor, and like him he was governed by his wife ; like him, he was faithful to one who was destitute both of the modesty and the gentleness of her sex. Justinian, on his accession, hastened to share the honours of his new dignity with Theodora, the daughter of a charioteer in the public circus, who had united the infamy of a vicious life to the degradation of her father's occupation, until the emperor raised her to the throne. Henceforward her manners were irreproachable ; her advice was frequently courageous and energetic ; but her cruelty and her avarice contributed to render the emperor odious. Antonina, the wife of Belisarius, was also the daughter of a public charioteer ; her conduct had been as irregular as that of the empress, her character was equally firm and audacious : unlike Theodora, however, she did not conquer her early propensities ; but though a faithless wife, she was a faithful friend to her husband. Admitted to the confidence of the empress, she led the way to Belisarius's future greatness, she defended him by her influence, and maintained him at the head of the army, in spite of the intrigues of his rivals.

Not more than 10,000 foot and 5000 horse were embarked at Constantinople for the conquest of Africa, under the command of Belisarius, in the month of June 533. The fleet which conveyed this army was unable to make the whole voyage without taking in provisions ; it was received with indiscreet hospitality in a Sicilian port, then dependent on the Ostrogoths. The barbaric

kings who had partitioned out the provinces of the Roman empire, would have done well to recollect that their cause was a common one ; their means of resistance would then have been far superior to any means of attack possessed by the Greeks : private offences and family quarrels had, however, disturbed their mutual relations ; the marriages of kings with the daughters of kings began to exercise their fatal influence, by embroiling those they were intended to unite ; so that the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, the Franks, and the Vandals, blindly rejoiced in each other's disasters.

Belisarius landed in September 533, at Caput Vadæ, which is about five days' journey from Carthage. The Vandals were so little prepared for this invasion, that the brother of Gelimer was at that very time with the best troops of the army in Sardinia, where he was endeavouring to quell the insurrection. This circumstance induced Gelimer to avoid a battle for some days. But while he was thus temporising, he afforded Belisarius an opportunity of impressing the inhabitants of the provinces (the Africans, who were still called Romans) with a high idea of the discipline of his army, of the liberal protection he was inclined to afford them, and of the mildness of his own character. Belisarius founded his hopes of conquest on the sympathies of the people ; he displayed such a paternal benevolence towards these provincials, whom he came to protect and not to subdue ; he so carefully respected their rights, and so scrupulously spared their property, that the Africans, who had long been oppressed, humiliated, and robbed by their barbarian masters, no sooner hailed the Roman eagles, than they imagined that the days of their greatest prosperity under the Antonines were returned. Before the arrival of Belisarius, Gelimer reigned over seven or eight millions of subjects, in a country which had perhaps contained 80,000,000 ; on a sudden he found himself alone with his Vandals in the midst of a Roman population. The historian Procopius, who seeks

to exaggerate the number of the conquered, in order to enhance the glory of the conquest, asserts that the nation did not possess fewer than 160,000 men capable of bearing arms ; — a considerable number certainly, and one which supposes a rapid increase since the former conquest ; but extremely small if it be taken to denote a nation and not an army.

Gelimer attacked Belisarius with all the troops he had been able to muster, on the 14th of September, at about ten miles from Carthage : his army was routed, his brother and his nephew were killed, and he himself was obliged to fly to the deserts of Numidia, after having caused his predecessor Hilderic to be murdered in prison. On the morrow Belisarius entered Carthage, and that great capital, in which the Romans still far outnumbered the Vandals, received him as a deliverer.

Never was there a more rapid conquest than that of the vast kingdom of the Vandals : never did the disproportion between the number of the conquerors and the conquered, more clearly show that tyranny is the worst policy, and that the abuse of victory by those who govern with the sword, hollows a sepulchre beneath their thrones. In the beginning of September Belisarius had landed in Africa ; before the end of November Gelimer had recalled his second brother from Sardinia, collected another army, fought and lost another battle ; Africa was conquered, and the kingdom of the Vandals destroyed. The army of Belisarius would have required much more time merely to advance along the coast, but the Roman fleet transported to Ceuta the tribunes of the soldiers who were to take the command of the towns ; they were every where received with acclamation ; every where the Vandals were intimidated, submitted without resistance, and disappeared. Gelimer, who had retired into a distant fortress of Numidia, with a small retinue, capitulated in the following spring, and the terms of his submission were most honourably observed by Justinian. Gelimer received ample pos-

sessions in Galatia, where he was allowed to grow old in peace, surrounded by his friends and kinsfolk. The observance of faith plighted to a rival was too rare a virtue in those times for us to pass it by in silence. The bravest of the Vandals enlisted in the troops of the empire, and served under the immediate orders of Belisarius. The remainder of the nation was involved in the convulsions of Africa which we shall shortly mention, and ere long entirely disappeared.

Justinian demanded trophies from his generals, but he grudged them their successes. His jealousy at the rapid victories of Belisarius was intense. Before the close of that same autumn of 534 which had sufficed for the conquest of a kingdom, too soon for the welfare of Africa, he ordered him to return to Constantinople. In the matchless character of Belisarius, the virtues themselves seemed adapted to the despotism under which he served. The will of his sovereign, and not the welfare of the empire, was the sole end of his actions, and the sole standard of what he judged to be good or evil. He foresaw that his recall would be the ruin of Africa, but he did not hesitate to obey the mandate. As he was embarking at Carthage, he saw the flames which were already lighted by the insurgent Moors in the provinces which he had reconquered, and he predicted that his work would be undone as rapidly as it had been accomplished ; but the will of the emperor seemed to him to be the will of fate. His prompt obedience allayed the jealousy which his remarkable success had excited, and Justinian allowed him the honours of a triumph, and the consulate for the ensuing year. This triumph was the first which Constantinople had ever seen conferred upon a subject.

The conquest of Africa was no sooner accomplished, than Justinian projected that of Italy, and he designed to subdue the Ostrogoths by the same general who had acquired so much glory in defeating the Vandals. A Roman emperor may be supposed to have thought his honour interested in the possession of Rome and of

Italy, but the West had no reasons for wishing him success. The Vandals had rendered themselves odious by their cruelty, their religious persecutions, and their piracies ; but the Goths had better claims on public esteem : they were the wisest, the most temperate, and the most virtuous of the Germanic tribes, and they gave substantial grounds of hope to the nations which they had regenerated. Their glory did not terminate with the reign of Theodoric, but to the very close of the struggle in which they perished they displayed virtues which we look for in vain amongst the other barbarians.

We have seen that upon the death of the great Theodoric (A. D. 526), the crown of Italy descended to his grandson Athalaric, who was then only ten years old, under the regency of his mother Amalasonta. This princess, who had lost her husband before her father's death, attempted to procure for her son, the only hope of his family and of his nation, those advantages of a liberal education which she had herself enjoyed. But Athalaric, who felt the irksomeness of study more than its advantages, easily found young courtiers who persuaded him that the protecting care of his mother was degrading to him. The old warriors of the nation had not lost their prejudices against Roman instruction, and Roman manners ; Athalaric was removed from his mother's guardianship, and before he was sixteen, drunkenness and debauchery brought him to the grave (A. D. 534). Out of respect for the blood of Theodoric, and the grief of Amalasonta, she was allowed by the Goths to choose the future partner of her throne from amongst her kindred. She accordingly bestowed her hand on Theodatus, who, like herself, preferred studious pursuits to the boisterous revelry of the Goths ; who passed for a philosopher ; whom she believed to be destitute of ambition, and who had, indeed, sworn to her that, grateful for so signal a favour, he would respect her commands and allow her to rule alone, whilst he shared her throne in appearance. No sooner, however, was he crowned,

than he caused his benefactress to be arrested (30th of April, 535), conveyed as a prisoner to an island in the lake of Bolsena, and a few months afterwards strangled in her bath. Justinian embraced the cause of Amalasonta, as he had embraced that of Hilderic, to avenge, though not to protect her. Belisarius received orders to prepare for the conquest of Italy, but the army with which he was entrusted for this important enterprise, amounted only to 4500 barbarian horsemen, and 3000 Isaurian foot-soldiers. Belisarius landed in Sicily in 535, and in the first campaign of the Gothic war he subdued that island ; the city of Palermo alone offered him some resistance.

In the following year Belisarius transported his army to Reggio in Calabria, marching along the coast, accompanied by his fleet, till he arrived at Naples : no forces were sent to oppose his progress ; he was assisted by the same favourable circumstances as in Africa, and his humanity and moderation procured for him the same advantages in Italy as in that country. On a sudden the Goths perceived, with consternation, that they were in an isolated position, in the midst of a people which invoked their enemies as its liberators. All their plans of defence were confounded, treason began to show itself in their ranks, and a relation of Theodatus, to whom the government of Calabria had been entrusted, passed over to the standard of the emperor. The cowardice of their king was, however, the chief cause of the ruin of the Goths. Theodatus had shut himself up in Rome, whilst Belisarius besieged Naples, and entered it by means of an aqueduct. The nation of the Goths, which still reckoned 250,000 warriors, dispersed, indeed, from the Danube and the Rhone to the extremities of Italy, would no longer submit to so degrading a yoke. Vitiges, a brave general, who had been ordered to secure the approaches to Rome, was suddenly proclaimed king by the soldiers, and raised upon the buckler ; whilst Theodatus, as soon as he heard of this revolt,

took flight, and was slain by the hand of a private enemy, against whom he did not even attempt to defend himself (August, 536).

After the election of Vitiges, the war of the Ostrogoths assumed a new character. The struggle was no longer one of cowardice and improvidence with talent ; it lay between two great men, both of them masters of the art of war, both equally worthy of the love and of the confidence of their respective nations ; both contending against insurmountable difficulties. Belisarius was, as he had been in Africa, just, humane, generous, and brave ; he won the hearts of the Italians ; but his court kept him without money, and almost without an army. The hard law of necessity, the orders he received from Constantinople, and the rapacious colleagues who were sent out to him, compelled him to sustain the war by plunder, and to strip those whom he would have willingly protected. Vitiges was still at the head of a powerful and martial people ; but his kingdom was disorganised, time was needed to collect his scattered battalions, and to revive the confidence of his soldiers, who believed that they were surrounded by traitors. He found it necessary to evacuate Rome, (which Belisarius occupied on the 10th of December, 536,) and even to quit the lower part of Italy, and fall back upon Ravenna, in order to restore the discipline of his army. As soon as he had organised his forces, he returned, in the month of March following, to besiege Belisarius in the ancient capital which he had ceded to him.

Our prescribed limits do not allow us to give any detailed account of the military operations even of the greatest general. A succinct abridgment like the present does not profess to afford any instruction in the art of war. We merely design to present in one picture the fall of the ancient empire, and the dispersal of those elements out of which the modern world was to arise, referring to other works for details. Nor would it be without repugnance that we should dwell upon the sufferings of humanity, or the unparalleled



calamities which were caused by two virtuous chiefs. The spectacle of the excesses of tyranny is far less painful, for then our indignation relieves our sympathy. In recording the crimes of the sons of Clovis, the horror these monsters inspire, leaves no room for pity. But when Vitiges besieged Belisarius in Rome during a whole year, two heroes sacrificed two nations to their animosity. Belisarius kept up the courage of his feeble garrison by his intrepidity, his patience, and his perseverance, whilst the entire population of Rome was perishing by famine: Vitiges, equally inflexible, led back the battalions of his Goths to the walls of Rome, until the assailants were all destroyed by the sword, or by pestilential diseases. His courage and his ability shone conspicuous in this deadly war; if he had succeeded, the independence of his nation was secured; but it perished in these fatal conflicts.

Justinian had desired that Italy should again be classed amongst the provinces of the Roman empire. But his vanity was satisfied by the mere possession of the soil on which the Romans had raised their power; and he purchased it by the sacrifice of all that made it glorious or valuable. Rome was defended; but during the long famine to which it was reduced it lost almost all its inhabitants. The Goths were conquered; but they were destroyed, not subdued, and the void they left in the energetic and warlike population of Italy was never repaired. The Italians were delivered from a yoke which they thought debasing, but they fell under one a thousand times worse. The long continuance of the war, and the pressure of want, did violence to the natural moderation of Belisarius, and, moreover, gave him time to receive direct orders from Justinian, instead of following his own impulses.

The extortions practised on the Roman subjects were rigorous in the extreme, and that population, which had repaired its losses during the protecting reign of Theodoric, was swept off by famine, pestilence, and the avenging sword of the Goths: the glorious monuments

of Italy,—the very stones,—were not rescued from destruction. The master-works of art were used as military engines, and the statues which adorned the mole of Adrian were hurled down upon the besiegers. In his utmost need, Vitiges had demanded the succour of the Franks, and a dreadful invasion of that barbarian people, which was marked by the destruction of Milan and Genoa (A.D. 538–539), taught the Goths, that these fierce warriors, thirsting for booty and for blood, did not even care to distinguish their allies from their enemies. On the same day they cut to pieces the army of the Goths, and the army of the Greeks, which had both reckoned upon their assistance ; at length they almost all perished from want in the Cisalpine country, which they had devastated ; and when soldiers like these perish from hunger, it is easy to infer that nothing remains either to the peasant or to the citizen, which their oppressors can pillage or destroy.

In March 538, when the Goths were obliged to raise the siege of Rome, Belisarius profited by their discouragement, their sufferings, and their faults ; he laid siege in his turn to Ravenna, and forced Vitiges to give up that town, and to surrender himself prisoner (December, 539). Vitiges was as deeply indebted to the generosity of Justinian, as Gelimer had been ; he passed his days in affluence at Constantinople : Belisarius was at the same time recalled from Italy.

Justinian hastened to recall his general after each victory, and Belisarius was not less prompt in his obedience ; but every time he quitted the command, the provinces he abandoned were exposed to the most dreadful calamities ; and the whole empire had ample reason to regret that the fate of several millions of men depended on the caprices of a court, on the mistrust or the envy of a haughty woman, or of a jealous despot. Five years before, at the very time when Belisarius was leaving Africa, in obedience to the orders of Justinian, a rebellion broke out among the Moors, and the hero, who was submissively leaving those shores in the mo-

ment of danger, could see from his vessel the fires which were kindled over the country by the very enemy from whose attacks he had hitherto protected it. The ministers of Justinian seemed studiously to increase, by their vexatious enactments, the resentment of the armed population of Africa, the weakness and the degradation of the unarmed. The wandering Moor, whose habits were, even in that age, not unlike those of the Bedouin Arab, endeavoured to destroy all cultivation, all permanent dwellings, and industrious arts, and drove civilisation back to the sea coast: there it was restricted to the maritime towns and their narrow suburbs; so that during the remainder of Justinian's reign it was estimated that the province of Africa barely equalled one third of the province of Italy.

The retirement of Belisarius after the capture of Vitiges was followed by similar calamities; Pavia was the only town of importance which still resisted the Roman yoke. It was defended by a thousand Goths, who proclaimed their chief Hildebald king: he, as well as his successor Eraric, was assassinated within the year, and was succeeded by Totila, a young kinsman of Vitiges, whose excellent abilities were only equalled by his bravery and his humanity. This new king repaired the dilapidated fortunes of the Goths by his remarkable virtues as much as by his victories: he recalled to the army the sons of those who had already fallen in its ranks; he harassed, attacked, and routed successively eleven generals, to whom Justinian had entrusted the defence of the different towns of Italy: he crossed the whole peninsula from Verona to Naples, in order to collect the scattered warriors of his nation, who had been obliged to submit in every province, and in the course of three years (A. D. 541–544) the kingdom of the Ostrogoths became, under his command, as extensive, if not as powerful, as it was when the war began. Justinian occasionally sent reinforcements to his generals in Italy, but these scanty supplies served only to prolong a contest which they could not hope to terminate. The

arrival of 200 men from Constantinople was looked upon as an event ; and such was the universal desolation of Italy, that bands of one or two hundred soldiers crossed its whole extent, without meeting any sufficient obstacle to their progress. In 544, Justinian sent back Belisarius, but without an army ; so that for four years this hero was compelled to struggle with his adversary, more like a captain of banditti than a distinguished general ; the extent of the havoc was disproportioned to their scanty resources, and a handful of soldiers on either side burnt and destroyed what they were unable to defend.

Totila besieged Rome for a long time, and obtained possession of it on the 17th of December, 546 ; he determined to destroy a city which had displayed such inveterate hostility to the Goths ; he rased the walls, and forced the inhabitants to seek a refuge in the Campania. For forty days the ancient capital of the world remained deserted. Belisarius took advantage of this occurrence to re-enter it, and fortify himself in it once more ; but he was again obliged to quit it. Justinian, in leaving this great man, to contend, almost without money and without troops, against an enemy infinitely superior to him in strength, seemed to be labouring to destroy a reputation of which he was jealous. When he recalled Belisarius for the second time, Italy was ravaged for four years by the conflicting fury of civil and foreign war ; the Franks and Germans made another incursion without the authority of their government, without leaders, and with the sole object of plundering on a large scale. At length, in 552, Justinian formed an army of 30,000 men ; he appointed a man to command it, in whom we scarcely expect to find the talents or the character of a hero ; but the eunuch Narses, who had passed his youth in directing the tasks of the women in the palace, and had gained experience in various embassies in his later years, fully justified the choice of Justinian, when placed at the head of the army. In the month of July, 552, he gained a great victory over the Goths in the neighbourhood of Rome,

when Totila was slain : in the month of March, 553, he won another battle near Naples, in which Teia, who had been chosen to succeed Totila, was also killed : and thus was accomplished the overthrow of the monarchy of the Ostrogoths, the almost total destruction of that nation, and the submission to the emperor of the sad deserts of that Italy, in which all that was most delicious and magnificent in the world had so long been accumulated.

After the victories of Narses, Italy was governed, in the name of the emperor of Constantinople, by Exarchs, who resided at Ravenna, though indeed the government of the country scarcely remained sixteen years under the control of the empire of the East : the fortified town of Ravenna, however, and the Pentapolis, which is now called La Romagna, not in memory of Rome, but of the Greeks who affected to call themselves Romans, long formed part of its possessions. La Romagna and some other smaller provinces continued for two centuries, that is, until 752, to be governed by the exarch of Italy ; another exarch governed Africa, and resided at Carthage. Justinian had even extended his conquests to some cities in Spain, and had contributed to keep alive anarchy in that great peninsula ; but as the Roman province which he had recovered was not sufficiently important to deserve a third exarch, Greek dukes were appointed to such of the Spanish towns as opened their gates to the generals of Justinian, and of his successors, from 550 to 620.

The wars which Justinian carried on in the East against Chosroes occasioned as much misery as his expedition in the West. Syria was entirely occupied, and the frontiers of Armenia were devastated by the Persians, whilst Colchis was disputed with the greatest obstinacy, for sixteen years, by the two empires (A.D. 540—556). After a prodigious waste of human life, the frontiers of the Romans and the Persians remained much the same as they were before the war : as those countries have remained in a barbarous state ever since, they the less merit our notice.

Justinian was nearly eighty years of age, when he was obliged to have recourse for the last time to the valour and ability of his general, who was not less aged than himself, in order to repel an invasion of the Bulgarians, who, in 559, advanced to the gates of Constantinople. The venerable Belisarius was looked upon as the only safeguard of the empire ; he with difficulty collected 300 of those soldiers, who, in happier years, had shared his toils ; to these was added a timorous troop of peasants and recruits, who refused to fight. He succeeded, however, in repulsing the Bulgarians ; but this success, and the enthusiasm of the people, excited the jealousy and the fears of Justinian, who had invariably punished his general for the victories he gained. In 540 he had been condemned to a fine amounting to 120,000*l.* sterling : in 563 a conspiracy against the emperor was discovered, Belisarius was implicated in it, and whilst his pretended accomplices were executed, Justinian affected to pardon his old servant ; but he caused his eyes to be torn out, and confiscated his whole fortune. This account is adopted by the young and learned biographer of Belisarius, lord Mahon, though it only rests upon the authority of historians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The general who had conquered two kingdoms was to be seen, blind, and led by a child, holding out a wooden cup before the convent of Lauros to crave the pittance of an obolus. It appears, however, that the disapprobation of the people caused Justinian to repent his severity, and Belisarius was restored to his palace, where he died on the 13th of March, 565 : Justinian also expired on the 14th of September in the same year.

The glory which Justinian derives from the collection and publication of the ancient Roman laws, is more solid and more durable than that of his conquests. The Pandects and the Code, which were arranged and promulgated by his authority, contain the immense store of the wisdom of preceding ages ; and we cannot but be astonished at finding so much respect for law in the

character of a despot ; so much virtue in so corrupt an age ; so deep a reverence for antiquity, at a time when every institution was overthrown ; and, lastly, a system of legislation entirely Latin, published by a Greek in the midst of Greeks. For, although Justinian sometimes substituted the stamp of servility for the noble and primitive character of the ancient law ; though he occasionally deranged a system which had been slowly matured by the jurists, to satisfy the whim of the moment, or his own personal interest, it cannot be denied that the work he sanctioned is a valuable monument of justice and of reason, of which he was, though not the author, the preserver.

That absolute government which had corrupted every Roman virtue, did not, in the time of Justinian, even give internal peace to the people in exchange for their lost liberty. Despotism may render civil war and popular commotions dishonourable, but it cannot suppress them. There was no longer sufficient virtue in Constantinople to induce a man to expose his life in the defence of his civil rights, for the honour of his country, or for the laws which he regarded as sacred ; but battles were fought for the charioteers of the circus. Chariot-racing, which had been a favourite amusement of the Romans, was introduced into Constantinople, and afterwards into all the great towns of the empire ; the prizes were contended for by charioteers dressed either in a blue or a green uniform : the entire population was divided into two parties distinguished by these colours. Two hostile factions broke out throughout the empire ; religion, politics, morality, liberty, and all the lofty sentiments of human nature, had no part in their animosity ; but the Greens and the Blues, who were only contending for the prizes of the circus, could not be satisfied without shedding each other's blood. Justinian himself, worked upon by an ancient enmity of Theodora, embraced the cause of the Blues, and during his reign the Greens could never obtain justice. The judges, who were to pass sentence on the property, the good name, or the lives of the citizens,



examined less into their conduct and their rights than into the colour of their party. On several occasions private violence assumed the character of open sedition; but in 532, during the most terrible of these revolts, which is called *Nika*, or victory, from the cry which was adopted, the capital remained for five days in the power of an infuriated mob: the cathedral, several churches, baths, theatres, palaces, and a large portion of the town, was reduced to ashes. Justinian, who was on the point of taking flight, was only maintained upon the throne by the firmness of his wife Theodora. Torrents of blood were shed by men who were too cowardly to defend their country against barbarians, or their rights against internal oppression.

## CHAP. XI.

SUCCESSION OF GREEK EMPERORS. — NARSES, EXARCH OF ITALY. — THE GEPIDÆ AND THE LOMBARDS, BETWEEN THE ALPS AND THE DANUBE. — ROMANTIC STORY OF ALBOIN, KING OF THE LOMBARDS; HIS CONQUEST OF THE GEPIDÆ; HIS INVASION OF ITALY. — RESISTANCE OF THE MARITIME CITIES OF ITALY; THEIR INTERNAL GOVERNMENT. — MARITIME CITIES OF SPAIN, AFRICA, AND ILLYRICUM. — GROWTH OF MUNICIPAL LIBERTIES. — INDEPENDENCE OF THE LOMBARDS; THEIR THIRTY DUKES IN ITALY. — THE FOUR FRANKIC KINGS, SONS OF CHLOTHAIRE. — GROWTH OF A TERRITORIAL ARISTOCRACY. — THE MORD DOM, OR SUPREME JUDGE OF THE FRANKS. — THE FOUR KINGDOMS OF GERMANY. — GONTRAN, SURNAMED “THE GOOD.” — CHILPERIC, THE NERO OF FRANCE. — FREDEGUNDE. — BRUNECILDE. — EFFORTS OF GONTRAN TO KEEP DOWN THE NOBLES. — SCENE IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FRANKS, FROM GREGORY OF TOURS. — CHILDEBERT II.; HIS FEROCITY. — ENERGY, TALENTS, AND CRUELTY OF BRUNECILDE. — HER SUCCESSES. — HER DEFEAT AND MISERABLE DEATH.

At the time when the empire of the West was overthrown, when each of its provinces was occupied by a different people, and when as many kingdoms were founded as there were daring chiefs at the head of a horde of barbarians, the world presented a scene of such complex and conflicting interests, that it seemed a very difficult task to follow the general progress of events. This difficulty has, however, ceased in a great measure, as far as we are concerned. From the reign of Justinian the interest of European history lies almost entirely between the Greek empire and the kingdom of the Franks, which, although it had not yet acquired the title of empire, stood at the head of the whole of western Europe. This exclusive interest, this almost universal monarchy of the Franks in the West, continued until the end of the reign of Louis le Debonnaire, and the civil wars between his children in 840.

During these three centuries, the history of the Latin

world is frequently obscure, generally barbarous, and always incomplete ; but it is constantly connected with the progressive revolutions of that great people which will be the principal object of our observations. During the same period the history of the East became extremely complicated ; the sceptre of Justinian passed successively to his nephew, Justin the younger (A. D. 565—574) ; from him to Tiberius II. (574—582) ; to Maurice (582—602) ; to Phocas (602—610) ; and to Heraclius (610—642). Three of these princes, Tiberius, Maurice, and Heraclius, were distinguished by their virtues ; and the claim of this period to the epithet of glorious, is at least equal to that of the reign of Justinian. It would probably be esteemed so, if the events were better known ; but, in monarchies, the interest excited by public concerns is not sufficiently strong to induce many men of distinguished talents to devote themselves to the severe labours of the historian. Annals are seldom continued from the zeal of their authors alone: the vanity of the monarch may, indeed, lead him to appoint an historiographer, but at the same time it forbids the salaried historian to tell the truth. Events are then only recorded in panegyrics, which inspire no confidence, or in dry and insipid chronicles, which excite no interest. The good fortune by which the reign of Justinian possessed a great historian was rare indeed in the history of Byzantium.

This same period answers to that of the birth and education of a man, who was destined in his maturer years to change the face of the world. Justinian died in 565, and Mohammed was born in 569 ; yet, until his flight to Medina in 622, the remainder of the world, and even Arabia itself, was almost unconscious of his existence ; and as the ten last years of his life (A. D. 622—632), after he had obtained the sovereign power, were devoted to the conquest of that great peninsula, the empire only learned the mighty revolution which had taken place, when (A. D. 628—632) it was called upon for the first time to meet the Musulmauns in the field.

Before we engage in the history of the founder of the

new religion, we shall, in another chapter, survey the state of the East, and the conquests and defeats of Chosroes II., whose memorable reign cast a lustre, which was but the harbinger of its fall, over the monarchy of the Sassanian Persians. Our present object has been simply to recall the concordance of events in the different parts of the world, before we return to the history of the West.

That country, which had so long been looked upon as the queen of the earth, — that Italy, which had been ruined and desolated by the wars of the Greeks, and by the annihilation of the monarchy of the Ostrogoths, soon underwent another revolution. The eunuch Narses, who had conquered, was appointed to govern it ; in his extreme old age he administered for fifteen years (A. D. 553—568) the affairs of a country, which, perhaps, stood in need of a younger and more active ruler. This extraordinary man, who is said to have attained the age of ninety-five, had established himself at Ravenna, whence he once more imposed the laws of the empire on the Italians ; laws of which they knew little, except the grievous imposts heaped upon them in their name. Narses was the avaricious servant of an avaricious master ; he was accused of amassing excessive wealth by draining the people, who enjoyed no advantages which might compensate for the costliness of their government. The fugitives who had been dispersed by the Greek and Gothic armies gradually congregated in the towns ; Milan arose from its ruins, and the other cities recovered a part of their population ; but the country was entirely deserted, and the crops which sustained the remnant of the Italians were probably raised by the hands of citizens : no one dared to inhabit the rural districts, at a time when public force was extinct, and no protection was ensured to the agriculturist. The events which occurred at the close of the administration of Narses, showed that there was no army in Italy ; although barbarous and hostile nations, who were acquainted with the roads throughout the country, were besieging its approaches.

Narses was driven from his post in the most insulting manner by the empress Sophia, wife of Justin II., who sent him a distaff, and told him that he ought to resume those feminine occupations for which he was fitted. He has been accused of having summoned the barbarians to assist him in avenging himself, but it is certain that such an invitation was unnecessary.

In that district, which had once been Roman, extending from the foot of the Alps to the Danube, the Gepidæ, of Gothic, and the Lombards, of Vandal, race, had taken up their abode: both of these tribes were said to surpass in ferocity any of the preceding enemies of the empire; both of them had accepted the alliance of the Greeks for the sake of tribute, disguised under the name of pension. The Gepidæ were to guard the entrance to Italy: the Lombards had contributed to the conquest of that country, by the valiant auxiliaries they had furnished to Narses. The most virulent animosity divided these two nations, which had been kept alive by the romantic and, perhaps, fabulous adventures related of their kings. The historians of a barbarous people are always unacquainted with, or indifferent to, the domestic events of their country: kings alone appear upon the scene; their adventures take the place of national exploits; and even the fictions of which they are the heroes merit some attention, as they show us the bent of the popular imagination.

Alboin, the young heir to the throne of the Lombards, had already displayed his valour in an expedition against the Gepidæ, and had slain with his own hand the son of their king; nevertheless his father would not consent to admit him to his table until he had received his arms from the hands of some foreign sovereign. Such was the invariable custom of their nation, afterwards incorporated into the laws of chivalry, and called the arming of a knight. This custom is attested by Paul Warnefrid, a Lombard historian, contemporary with Charlemagne. Alboin, with forty of his bravest companions, did not hesitate to ask his knightly arms

at the hands of Thurisund, king of the Gepidæ, and father of the prince whom he had slain. The duties of hospitality were more sacred in the eyes of the old king than those of vengeance, and the prince was received at the table of the monarch of the Gepidæ; he was arrayed in new armour, and protected amid the disorder of a banquet, at which Cunimund, another son of Thurisund, attempted to avenge his brother. This warlike hospitality, with which so many vindictive and hostile feelings were mingled, gave Alboin an opportunity of inflicting a fresh outrage on the royal house of the Gepidæ: he carried off Rosamunde, the daughter of Cunimund, but he was overtaken before he could escape; the princess was taken from him, his offer of marriage rejected, and the two kings, as well as the two nations, excited by mutual aggressions, mutually determined on each other's destruction. Their hostility broke out when Alboin and Cunimund had both succeeded to their aged parents. The Lombard king, perceiving that he was the weaker, sought for foreign assistance; he enlisted the Saxons under his standard, and he more especially strengthened his forces by an alliance with the khan of the Avars, a nomadic people, which had descended from the mountains of Tartary and had crossed all the Slavonian and Sarmatian deserts, in its flight from the vengeance of the Turks. The Avars had threatened the frontiers of the Greeks, invaded the territory of several German nations subject to the Franks, and had afterwards roamed over the north of Europe with their flocks, seeking to possess themselves of some territory by the sword. Alboin united his desire of vengeance on the Gepidæ, to a design which he cherished of conquering Italy and establishing his people in that country. The valley of the Danube had been so cruelly devastated by successive barbarous hordes, that every trace of its ancient civilisation was effaced. Its rich pastures were peculiarly adapted to a pastoral people; but the Germans were unwilling to perform the drudgery of the mechanical or agricultural

arts, though they had learned to appreciate the enjoyments they procure: they accordingly wished to subdue a country in which the conquered people should work for them, and they concluded a singular treaty with the Avars, by which it was stipulated that they should attack the Gepidæ, destroy their monarchy, and divide their spoils in common; but that, after this conquest, the Lombards should abandon their own country, as well as that of their subdued enemies, to their allies, and start themselves to seek their fortune elsewhere. These extraordinary conditions were literally fulfilled; the kingdom of the Gepidæ was overrun; their army was defeated by Alboin in a great battle (A. D. 566); their wealth was divided between the conquerors; the inhabitants of the country were reduced to slavery, and the princess Rosamunde was given back to Alboin, who married her. At the same time the Lombards prepared to abandon to the Avars Pannonia and Noricum, where they had dwelt for forty-two years. They gathered together their wives, their children, their old men, and their slaves together, removed all their valuables, and, having set fire to their houses, migrated towards the Italian Alps.

Alboin, who united in his own character all the virtues and all the vices of a barbarian, was not less remarkable for his prudence and his valour, than for his ferocity and intemperance. The nation of the Lombards, of which he was the leader, had been distinguished above all the nations of Germany for its bravery ever since the time of Tacitus, but it was far from numerous. Before he invaded Italy, he endeavoured to secure some reinforcements. He had formerly been connected with the Saxons, and as his previous conduct had won their confidence, twenty thousand of their warriors joined his army as soon as he summoned them to his standard. He liberated all the Gepidæ who had fallen to his lot, and enrolled them in his battalions. He also invited several other Germanic nations to join him; amongst them were the Bavarians, who had recently settled in the country which has since borne their name.



It was not an army, but an entire nation, which descended the Alps of Friuli in the year 568. The exarch Longinus, who had succeeded Narses, shut himself up within the walls of Ravenna, and offered no other resistance. Pavia, which had been well fortified by the kings of the Ostrogoths, closed its gates, and sustained a siege of four years. Several other towns, Padua, Monzelice, and Mantua, opposed their isolated forces, but with less perseverance. The Lombards advanced slowly into the country, but still they advanced; at their approach, the inhabitants fled to the fortified towns upon the sea coast, in the hope of being relieved by the Greek fleet, or at least of finding a refuge in the ships, if it became necessary to surrender the place. It was known that Alboin had bound himself by an atrocious vow to put to the sword all the inhabitants of Pavia, whenever it surrendered, and the resistance of that place, which it was impossible to relieve, was foreseen to be the prelude to dreadful calamities. The islands of Venice received the numerous fugitives from Venetia, and at their head the patriarch of Aquileia, who took up his abode at Grado: Ravenna opened its gates to the fugitives from the two banks of the Po; Genoa to those from Liguria; the inhabitants of La Romagna, between Rimini and Ancona, retired to the cities of the Pentapolis; Pisa, Rome, Gaeta, Naples, Amalfi, and all the maritime towns of the south of Italy were peopled at the same time by crowds of fugitives. The Lombards, who were ignorant of the arts used in sieges, could only reduce the cities which opposed them by famine, or by threats of a general massacre. This manner of attack was infallible for the places in the interior, but it was unsuccessful for those which lay upon the coast, all of which remained faithful to the Greeks.

But the Greeks, who were ignorant of the Latin language, indifferent to the welfare of remote countries whose geography even they had forgotten, and too much occupied with the wars of the Avars, the Persians, and the Arabs, to send succour to a few fortresses scattered

along a distant shore, contented themselves with an honorary allegiance. They gave up the revenues of each town for its defence, and they thought themselves generous; indeed they were so, for while they gave nothing, they exacted nothing. Each city had preserved its *curia*, and its municipal institutions. As long as the ruling power had been close at hand, and perpetually despotic, this *curia* had been only a means of oppression, but it became a means of salvation to cities forgotten by their sovereign, and left entirely to their own resources. Their constitution was purely republican; the confidence of the citizens, and the necessity of union, restored them to new vigour and dignity. The Greek emperor placed a duke at the head of each *curia*; he found it more economical to give that title to one of the citizens of these distant towns, and he generally followed the suggestion of the municipal senate in his choice. Thenceforward this duke or doge was nothing more than a republican magistrate, commanding a republican militia; disposing of finances, which were formed by almost voluntary contributions, and reviving in the breasts of the Italians, virtues which had been extinct for centuries.

This happy revolution which was silently taking place in the maritime towns, was so little perceived by the Greek writers, that they continued to put into the mouths of the free Venetians, the declaration, that they were the slaves of the empire, and that they desired to remain so. But this change, which gradually raised the most despicable of men from the depths of baseness and of crime to be an example to the world, was not confined to the maritime cities of Italy.

Throughout the west, the Greek empire possessed scattered points along the coast, which it was too weak to protect; and it appealed to that virtue which it could not know, and to that patriotism which it could not understand, to defend those walls which it was itself unable to guard. In Spain, the civil wars during the reign of Loewegild (A. D. 572—586), and of Recasdeo (A. D.

586—601), which had been excited by the mutual intolerance of the catholics and the Arians, opened a great number of maritime places to the Greeks, and established in them municipal governments, which afterwards became glorious examples for the free cities of Catalonia and Aragon. In Africa, the invasions of the Gætuli and the Moors, by cutting off all land communication between the maritime cities, converted them into so many little isolated republics ; these were shortly after destroyed by the great conquest of the Arabs. On the Illyrian coast, opposite to Italy, the inhabitants, driven to the cliffs which overhang the sea, found refuge against the risings of the Slavonians, and the inroads of the Bulgarians ;—the celebrated league of the free cities of Istria and Dalmatia, in which Ragusa obtained a distinguished place, had enjoyed an independent existence of several centuries, before its voluntary union with Venice in 997. The Greeks obtained no footing upon the coast of France, but the example of Genoa, Pisa, and Naples, was not lost upon the cities of Arles, Marseilles, and Montpellier, which traded with them ; a circumstance which explains the preservation of municipal privileges in the south of France, at a time when they were almost abolished in the north.

If the Lombards revived the spirit of social liberty, they also gave their subjects an example of the individual liberty and savage freedom of a nation which is more averse to servitude than to public disorder. Alboin did not long remain at the head of their armies ; after a reign of three years and a half from the capture of Pavia, (which he had spared, notwithstanding his vow), he was assassinated by that Rosamunde, whose father he had slain, whose people he had destroyed, and whom he had married after he had outraged her honour. In the intoxication of a banquet he sent her a cup which he had caused to be made of the scull of Cunimund, inlaid with gold, and ordered her *to drink with her father*. Rosamunde dissembled her resentment, but she employed that beauty which had been the source of her misfor-

tunes and her crimes, to corrupt two of the guards of Alboin, whom she armed with daggers against the life of her husband. After the death of Alboin, at Verona, (A.D. 573), Clef was elected by the suffrages of the Lombards, and raised upon the buckler : but after a reign of eighteen months he was killed by one of his pages, and the nation, which had already extended itself over a great portion of Italy, elected no successor to the throne for ten years. In every province where the Lombards had formed a settlement, their general assembly sufficed to administer justice, and to regulate the affairs of the government ; it elected dukes as presidents, the number of whom amounted to thirty, for the whole of Italy. At length, however, the weaker members of the community began to feel the want of an authority which should control that of the dukes, and protect the rights of the people ; whilst the danger of foreign wars, and the intrigues of the Greeks, rendered it advisable to name a chief. After an interregnum of ten years, Antharic was raised to the throne, probably in the year 584 ; and before the middle of the following century, the Lombards had acquired the habit of transmitting the crown from father to son, though they had not formally renounced the right of electing their kings.

The Lombards had scarcely completed the conquest of that part of Italy which is called Lombardy after them, when they crossed the Provençal Alps to pillage the territory of the kings of the Franks, or perhaps with the intention of effecting a settlement there.

After the death of Chlothaire I., which happened in 561, the Frankic monarchy was governed by his four sons, Charibert, Gontran, Chilperic, and Siegbert. This was only the second generation of the conquerors, for these princes were the grandsons of Clovis : yet Gontran, who survived all his brothers, did not die till the year 593, exactly a century after the marriage of Clovis with Chlotilde. This century had witnessed very important changes in the administration and in the opinions of the Franks. The warriors, who were all equal

when they arrived in Gaul, had soon found in the abuse of victory, means of acquiring iniquitous possessions, which could not be restrained within the bounds of equality. As the soil was cultivated by slaves, or by those classes of men, intermediate between slaves and free-born men, who are designated in their laws as tributaries, *lidi*, or fiscal dependants, the extent of their estates appeared to them no obstacle to their cultivation. The smaller the number of proprietors in proportion to the extent of their conquest, the more alarming was their usurpation. They did not, indeed, rob the wealthy Romans of their property by a general measure of spoliation, nor did they reduce them to slavery; but they constantly resorted to the law of the strongest, in a country where there was, in fact, no government—no protection for the weak. The poor freeman of Frankic extraction was not less exposed to this oppression than the Roman. The Franks still held their provincial assemblies for the administration of justice, but they were unable to enforce the decrees they issued; the rich, who then first began to be styled great, gathered around them a certain number of retainers called leudes, by means of grants of land, and with these followers they were enabled to drown the voice of justice; to intimidate, to harass, and to plunder the freemen, and thus to induce them also to enlist in their bands of leudes. Henceforward, the great alone resorted to the general assemblies of the nation; they alone were known to the sovereign; they alone were intrusted with the command of the army, when the ban was called out: in a short time they alone constituted the nation; he who was rich was sure to become more so, and he who was poor was sure to be stripped of the little he possessed: in less than a century the turbulent democracy of the Franks was transformed into a landed aristocracy of the most oppressive kind.

France, properly so called, was at that time divided into four provinces, which bore the name of kingdoms; Austrasia, Neustria, Burgundy, and Aquitaine. The Franks inhabited only the two former of these districts;

they frequently called the inhabitants of the southern provinces Romans, although the nobles, the freemen, and almost all who bore arms, were nearly all of Burgundian or Visigothic race: but as they found themselves in a minority amongst the Gauls, they had already abandoned the Germanic languages and adopted the Latin tongue. The assemblies of the Frankic people were still held at Metz, or Soissons, the capitals of Austrasia and Neustria, with sufficient frequency to prevent the people from being crushed under the weight of oppression. It was probably to protect the freemen against their more powerful countrymen, that the office of *mord dom*, or chief judge of murder, was instituted about that time. This functionary was the supreme minister of justice, and, as his authority was superior to that of the tribunals, he was able to inflict punishment on such as were too powerful to fall under the ordinary laws. The resemblance of the Teutonic name, *mord dom*, to the Latin *major domus*, caused the latter expression to be applied to this great officer, and it was afterwards translated *Mayor of the palace*, which confused and obscured the true derivation of the word, as well as the nature of the office. The Mord Dom was chosen by the people, not by the king; his duty was to administer justice, and not to superintend the royal revenues. His office was not perpetual, but he was nominated whenever the people stood in need of him, — in times of faction, or during a minority; the *bracile*, or arm of justice, was carried before him, and this arm frequently fell upon the heads of criminals of the highest rank.

Germany, which had been united to the confederation of the Franks, was also divided into four kingdoms; Franconia, or German France, Allemania, or Swabia, Bavaria, and Thuringia. Christianity was only beginning to penetrate into these barbarous countries; letters were entirely neglected, and hence their history as well as their institutions are totally unknown. It appears, however, that each of these great nations marched under the command of an hereditary duke, and that the only



connection they had with the Franks was that of making war in common. Twice in the course of the reigns of Chlothaire's sons, these Germanic nations were invited into France by one of the kings, and devastated the country wherever they passed. The sons of Chlothaire hated each other as cordially, and formed as many treacherous designs against each other, as the sons of Clovis had done. They found, however, the nation more willing to adopt their quarrels as grounds of civil war.

Of the four sons of Chlothaire, Charibert, who had fixed his residence at Paris, and who was the sovereign of Aquitaine, passed his short life in the pursuit of sensual enjoyments, and in the grossest debauchery, — a kind of vice then so common among kings that it scarcely excited any censure. He had four wives at once, two of whom were sisters; one of them, Marcovesa, had previously taken the veil, but this was no obstacle to the king. Charibert died in 567, and the division of his kingdom of Aquitaine amongst his three brothers was one of the great causes of the civil wars of that century.

Gontran, the second of these kings, who survived all the others, (his reign lasted from 561 to 593), and who had received Burgundy for his kingdom, and Orleans for his residence, is styled by Gregory of Tours, in opposition to his brothers, "the good king Gontran." His morality, indeed, passed for good: he is only known to have had two wives and one mistress, and he repudiated the first before he married the second: his temper was, moreover, reputed to be a kindly one; for, with the exception of his wife's physician, who was hewn in pieces because he was unable to cure her; of his two brothers-in-law, whom he caused to be assassinated; and of his bastard brother Gondebald, who was slain by treachery; no other act of cruelty is recorded of him, than that he razed the town of Cominges to the ground, and massacred all the inhabitants, men, women, and children. He was, however, in general, disposed to pardon offences; and he displayed



incredible forbearance in favour of his sister-in-law, Fredegunde, who more than once attempted his life.

In opposition to the good king Gontran, his third brother, Chilperic, has been called the Nero of France ; and, indeed, this barbarian, who aspired to the reputation of a poet, a grammarian, and a theologian, who was ambitious of every kind of success except that of gaining the affections of his subjects, may, on more than one account, be compared to the Roman tyrant. Soissons and Neustria had fallen to his share, and he reigned over them from 561 to 584. His habits were more grossly licentious than those of any other French prince, and the number of queens and mistresses he collected in his palace was so great that they were never enumerated. Amongst them, however, was the infamous Fredegunde, a worthy consort for such a monster. She was of low extraction, and had lived with Chilperic many years as his mistress before he married her ; at length, however, she acquired an absolute ascendancy over him, which she employed to rid herself of all her rivals. Queen Galsuintha was strangled ; queen Andovera was executed, after languishing for some time in exile ; the others were driven from the palace. The children of these unfortunate women shared the same fate ; three grown-up sons of Andovera perished successively by the order, or at least with the consent, of their father. The fate of their sister was even more cruel ; Fredegunde abandoned her to the brutal lust of her pages, before she was put to death.

A king who shed the blood of his children with so little remorse, was not likely to spare that of his people. France was full of unhappy victims whose eyes Chilperic had caused to be torn out, or whose arms he had cut off ; assassins, hired by Fredegunde, kept the country in a constant state of alarm ; they pursued her enemies beyond her own territory, and frequently murder'd them in the palaces of kings, or in the assemblies of the people. The young pages and priests whom she brought up in her palace, were the ministers of her vengeance or of her policy. They

committed the most horrible crimes with the persuasion that heaven would be open to them, if they succeeded not upon earth. "Go," said she, as she armed them with poisoned knives, "go; and if you return alive, great shall be the honour of yourselves and all your race; if you fall, I will distribute abundant alms at the tombs of the saints for the welfare of your souls!" The contemporary author who relates these words, does not seem to doubt the efficacy of such alms. Chilperic was assassinated in 584; but Fredegunde, who was left a widow with a child only four months old, Chlothaire II., succeeded in maintaining that infant prince on the throne of Neustria, and lived till the year 598 in glory and prosperity.

The fourth son, Siegbert, to whose share Austrasia had fallen, with Metz as a residence, was younger than his brothers when he mounted the throne, but his conduct was far more decorous, as he never had any other wife than the celebrated Brunehilde, daughter of Athanagild, the king of the Visigoths. The allegiance of the Germanic nations beyond the Rhine was so uncertain, that, without paying attention to their number or to the extent of country which they occupied, they had all been included in the share of this prince, although he was the youngest and consequently entitled to the smallest portion. But Siegbert soon taught the other Franks how formidable these lawless nations really were. Twice, in his disputes with Chilperic, he led them into the heart of France, and twice the banks of the Seine and the environs of Paris were devastated with inconceivable fury: Siegbert already considered himself master of Neustria, and had dismissed his Teutonic auxiliaries, laden with plunder, when, in 575, he was assassinated by two pages of Fredegunde. His crown passed to a minor, Childebert II. Nine years afterwards, as we have already observed, the crown of Neustria passed to another minor, Chlothaire II. Charibert had died without heirs, and Gontran, who was still alive, was also childless; and as he was not allowed to

be the guardian of his nephews, the three kingdoms of Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgundy, began to be looked upon, even by the Franks, as totally distinct. The minority of the kings, and the implacable hostility of their fathers, had enabled the nobility to usurp the supreme power. Thenceforth the government of Austrasia may be looked upon as an aristocracy feebly controlled by the authority of the *Mord Dom*, otherwise called the mayor of the palace. Neustria was approaching the same state, but by slower steps. King Gontran, who was indolent and capricious in his habits, and who lived in perpetual dread of the poniard, was unable to stay the progress of aristocratical power even in Burgundy; though he was not the guardian of his nephews, he still thought that he was necessary to their defence. One day, just as the priest who was about to celebrate mass in the cathedral at Paris, had imposed silence on the assembled crowd, Gontran, who had come to that city a short time after the death of Chilperic, with the intention of restoring peace in Neustria, addressed them in the following language: — “Men and women here assembled! I conjure you not to break the faith which you have plighted to me, and not to cause my death, as you have recently caused that of my brothers: I ask only for three years; but three years are absolutely necessary to enable me to bring up my nephews, whom I look upon as my adopted children. Let us beware, and may God forbid that at my death you should perish together with these children, since there no longer remains an individual of my race, who is of an age to protect you.” Instead of three, “good king Gontran” lived ten years longer, and died at length a natural death; but it may be doubted whether his life or his death were matters of such extreme importance to his family and to the nation as he supposed.

A natural son of Chlothaire, a brother whom Gontran refused to acknowledge, took advantage of the death of almost all the heads of his family to endeavour to get himself proclaimed king by the Franks. During this

civil war, Gontran summoned the national assembly to meet at Paris. Gregory of Tours, who was doubtless present on this occasion, gives us an animated description of all that passed there, which portrays the state of France far better than a long detail of the high feats performed in war. With a view, therefore, to throw light on this period, we shall borrow his language, without attempting to restrict ourselves to the national annals, or the chronological order of events. France was making no foreign conquests, and her relations with other nations were unchanged; but an insight into her national assemblies enables us to appreciate, not the events of a day, but the spirit of an age.

“ In the year 584, the kingdom of Austrasia,” says Gregory of Tours, “ deputed to this assembly, in the name of Childebert, Egidius bishop of Rheims, Gontran-Boson, and Siegwald (the chief ministers of the young prince), who were accompanied by a great multitude of Austrasian nobles. As soon as they had come in, the bishop said to king Gontran, ‘ We render thanks to Almighty God, that after so many toils he hath restored thee to thy provinces, and to thy kingdom.’ — ‘ It is indeed,’ answered Gontran, ‘ to him who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, that thanks are due ! He it is who hath done these things in his great mercy, and not thou, who by thy perfidious and perjured advice causedst the destruction of my provinces last year ; thou, whose plighted faith hath never been kept to any man ; thou, whose snares are spread on every side, more befitting an enemy of this realm, than a priest of God.’ The bishop shook with rage at this discourse, but he made no answer ; thereupon another deputy got up, and said, ‘ Thy nephew Childebert begetteth thee to order the cities which his father possessed to be restored to him.’ To which the king answered, ‘ I have already told you, that they were conferred on me by treaty, and that I will not give them up.’ Another deputy then said, ‘ Thy nephew demandeth that the wicked Fredegunde, who hath killed so many kings, be

given over to him, that he may avenge the death of his father, of his uncle, and of his cousins." Gontran answered, ' I have no power to deliver her into his hands, since she is herself the mother of a king : moreover I do not believe in the truth of your accusations against her.'

" After all these, Gontran-Boson approached the king, as if he had something to say ; but as it was already noised abroad that Gondewald had been proclaimed king, Gontran interrupted him, and said, ' Enemy of this land, and of our realm ! why didst thou go into the East some years ago to fetch back this Ballomer into our states ? (for so he always called Gondewald, who pretended to be his brother.) Thou art a traitor, and thou hast never kept any one promise thou hast made.' Then Gontran-Boson replied, ' Thou art our lord and our king, seated upon a throne, so that no one dares answer thy charges ; nevertheless I protest that I am innocent of all thou sayest : and if any one of my own rank has accused me of these things covertly, let him come forth and speak this day ; and thou, O king ! shalt submit this cause to the judgment of God, who will decide between us in open fight in one field.'

" Thereupon every one was silent, and the king rejoined, ' It is a thing which ought to inflame all your hearts, to drive this stranger from our frontiers, whose father was nothing better than the master of a mill, — ay ! his father held the comb, and carded wool.' Now, though it is very possible for one man to have two trades, a deputy answered the reproaches of the king, and said, ' What, then, dost thou affirm that this man had two fathers, — one a miller, and the other a wool-comber ? Take care, O king ! of what thou sayest ; for, except in spiritual matters, we have never yet heard that a man can have two fathers at once.' At these words many of the deputies laughed aloud, and one of them said, ' We take our leave, O king ! for since thou wilt not restore the cities which belong to thy nephew, we know that the axe which laid thy brothers low, is not broken, and will fall upon thy head also.'

“ In this scandalous manner the assembly broke up, and the king, irritated by their language, ordered the deputies to be pelted with horse-dung, straw, rotten hay, and the mud of the streets. They reached their homes with clothes begrimed with filth ; the indignities and insults they received were immense.”

The causes of the animosity which existed between Gontran and the deputies of Austrasia, are devoid of interest to us, and its consequences terminated with the generation that witnessed its commencement ; but the relation in which the king stood to the nobles, their mutual threats and recriminations, and the insulting vengeance which the sovereign took, teach us, what the titles of the actors incessantly lead us to forget, namely, the real character of kings and nobles at that time. We here discover what we ought to understand by “ that constitution which has stood unchanged for fourteen centuries, whose stability is so often held up to our admiration ;” just as if the monarchy had not been modified by each succeeding generation, and as if there was the slightest resemblance between the prerogatives of Gontran, those of Charlemagne, and those of Lewis XIV.

Childebert II. had arrived at man’s estate before the death of Gontran ; he was endowed with more energy, and perhaps with more talent, than had been displayed for a long time by any of the race of Clovis, but he also surpassed his predecessors in ferocity and cruelty. He felt that he was coerced on every side by the Austrasian aristocracy, which had silently usurped all the influence both of the people and of the crown. The country was divided into vast districts, which a few nobles claimed as their property ; they parceled out their land amongst such of their former companions in arms, the Frankic freemen, as consented to take the title of leudes, and to bind themselves by special oaths to second all the enterprises of their lord. With their assistance, these chieftains were sure of always retaining the government of the duchies, although they were nominally in the gift of the king or of the people : by law, every office



and dignity was elective, but, in fact, they were all hereditary. Childebert struggled against this aristocracy, sometimes with the aid of his uncle Gontran, but at others he had recourse to the surer expedients of the dagger or the axe. Those nobles who thought themselves the most secure of his friendship were sometimes murdered by his side, in the midst of the gayest festivals: we shudder as we read of the ferocious joy with which he excited the boisterous merriment of duke Magnorald at a bull-fight, whilst the headsman was silently advancing behind him; in the midst of his laughter his head was struck off, and fell into the circus. A great number of Austrasian nobles perished by the orders of Childebert II.: at the same time he took possession of the inheritance of his uncle Gontran, and drove the young Chlothaire, who was still governed by his mother Fredegunde, to the very confines of Neustria. He thought that he was securely seated upon his throne; but this can never be the case with a monarch who is hated by an entire people. He escaped a great many secret conspiracies, and repressed as many open revolts; but in 596 he perished by poison, and his murderers were sufficiently wary to escape those enquiries which, indeed, are not very active after the death of a man who is generally detested.

At this epoch, exactly a hundred years after the conversion of Clovis, the warlike nation of the Franks was subject to the government of three kings in their minority, and to the regency of two ambitious and cruel women, equally hardened in crime. In Neustria, Fredegunde was the guardian of Chlothaire, who was then scarcely eleven years old. In Austrasia, and in Burgundy, Brunechilde was the guardian of Theodebert II. and of Thierry, her grandsons—the one ten, the other nine, years old. Brunechilde had probably contributed to inspire her son, Childebert II., with that hatred of the aristocracy, and that ardent desire to crush it by the most violent means, which had at length brought him to the grave. This haughty woman, who was endowed



with great talents, great knowledge of mankind, and an invincible firmness of character, had, at various periods of her life, risen above calamities which would have crushed a feebler being. She had been twice married; first to Siegbert king of Austrasia, secondly to Merovæus (Meerwig) the son of Chilperic, and both her husbands had fallen by the dagger of assassins commissioned by Fredegunde: she had been the prisoner of her enemies; and she lived in the midst of powerful nobles, who had sworn her ruin. After the death of her son, she was even more fiercely threatened by the dukes of Austrasia, who were angry at not being able to resist her ascendancy, and indignant at her endeavours to corrupt the morals of her grandchildren, in order to govern longer in their stead; but who, spite of all their menaces and reproaches, never failed in the end to acknowledge her remarkable sagacity, and to yield to the authority which she exercised over them. She had long been possessed of extraordinary beauty; and she employed that beauty, (which is ever enhanced by a crown,) to its latest period, as a means of attaching to her service the most zealous of her partisans. But as she was a grandmother, and even a great-grandmother, before her death, the common arms of women must have become powerless in her hands. “Away from us, O woman!” said duke Ursis to her; “away, or the hoofs of our steeds shall tread thee to earth.” But Brunehilde stood her ground; she remained seventeen years in Austrasia after having been thus threatened; she continued to govern men who refused to acknowledge her even as their equal; she laid out the revenues of the kingdom in raising monuments which perpetuated her renown;—for the roads and towers, which long bore her name, might have been taken for Roman works; she vigorously seconded the exertions of pope Gregory the Great, in his missions for the conversion of Britain, which was then divided amongst the Anglo-Saxons; and, if we may believe the letters of the pope, it is to her zealous and

constant efforts that England owes the introduction of Christianity. The country which she governed with so much power, soon displayed signs of that prosperity which is always the result of energy united to talent.

But the dukes of Austrasia could not consent to submit: they found means to gain king Theodebert, who was almost imbecile, over to their side, as well as the slave whom Brunechilde had given him as a mistress, and whom he had subsequently married. With his consent, they carried off Brunechilde, in 598, from her palace, and left her alone, on foot, and without money, on the frontier of Burgundy. The haughty queen arrived at the court of the youngest of her grandsons, Thierry II., who reigned at Châlons-sur-Saone, as a suppliant. Her ambition was influenced by an ardent thirst for vengeance; she wished to govern Burgundy, but she wished it chiefly that she might turn its arms against Austrasia, and destroy her other grandson. Years passed ere she had acquired the necessary influence over the mind of Thierry, and over the character of the people: several assassinations were committed, to rid her of such as might have crossed her purposes; but she was still obliged patiently to submit to the open resistance of the Franks to a civil war, and to consent to temporary arrangements which in her heart she cursed. After an interval of fourteen years, the wished-for moment of vengeance arrived. In 612, Thierry II. declared war against his brother, and defeated him in two great battles; Theodebert himself fell into his hands, and he was put to death by the pitiless Brunechilde, as well as his infant son Merovæus, whose head was dashed to pieces against a stone. The triumph, however, of this barbarous queen over her descendants, was shortly followed by her own ruin. Chlothaire II., the son of her mortal enemy, had grown to manhood in an obscure district of Neustria, to which he had been driven by his more powerful cousins. The great lords of Austrasia, and amongst them the ancestors of the house of Charlemagne, who began to distinguish themselves in their

paternal possessions on the banks of the Meuse, were incensed at the thought of falling under the yoke of Brunehilde, and they had recourse to Chlothaire II. to effect their deliverance. Thierry II. suddenly died in the midst of his victories ; for the terrible science of poisons is the first branch of chemistry which is successfully cultivated by barbarous nations. The army which Brunehilde collected for the defence of her four great-grandsons, to whom she destined the crown, already meditated her destruction. The Austrasians, together with the Burgundians, met the Neustrians between the Marne and the Aisne in 613 ; but, at the first call of the trumpet to battle, the whole army of Brunehilde either took to flight, or passed over to the enemy's side. The queen herself, with her granddaughter and her great-grandsons, was brought before Chlothaire II., who immediately condemned to death all the remaining descendants of Clovis, so that he himself was the sole survivor of that race. Brunehilde underwent various torments for three days, and was led about on a camel in the presence of the whole army. Chlothaire afterwards ordered her to be tied by the hair, by one leg, and one arm, to the tail of a wild horse, and abandoned her to the kicks of the frantic animal, so that the fields were strewn with the lacerated limbs of the wretched mother of a line of kings.

## CHAP. XII.

OBSCURITY OF THE HISTORY OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY. — WANT OF HISTORICAL SOURCES. — ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LOMBARDS IN ITALY. — THEIR RAPID CIVILISATION. — EXTENT OF THE FRANKIC EMPIRE UNDER CHLOTHAIRE II.; ITS COMMERCIAL PROSPERITY. — DAGOBERT; HIS CHARACTER, HIS CRUELITIES, HIS LIBERALITIES TO THE MONKS. — ST. ELOI AND ST. OUEN. — SUCCESSION OF THIRTEEN FAINEANS KINGS; THEIR PREMATURE DEATHS. — STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE NOBLES AND THE FREEMEN. — EBROIN. — ST. LEGER. — PEPIN OF HERISTAL. — BATTLE OF TESTRY. — CHANGE OF DYNASTY. — RESTORATION OF GERMAN LANGUAGE AND INSTITUTIONS. — THE EAST EXHAUSTED BY RELIGIOUS WARS AND PERSECUTIONS. — GREEK EMPERORS. — WARS OF JUSTIN II. WITH CHOSROES NUSHIRVAN. — VIRTUES OF TIBERIUS II. — TALENTS OF MAURICE. — HIS CAMPAIGNS AGAINST THE AVARS AND THE PERSIANS; HIS ASSASSINATION. — HERACLIUS; HIS EXTRAORDINARY CHARACTER; HIS SUCCESSES AGAINST PERSIA.

THERE are certain periods in the history of the world, when a thick veil appears to overspread the earth; when all authentic documents and impartial witnesses disappear, and we are at a loss for a clue by which to trace the course of events. We are now arrived at one of these obscure periods — the seventh century; when the historians of the Eastern and Western empires are mute; when vast revolutions are in preparation, or drawing near to their accomplishment, without our having the means of detecting their peculiar circumstances, or their progressive steps. The night which shrouds in one common darkness the history of the Franks or Latins, and that of the Greeks, lasted till the moment when a new and unexpected light broke from Arabia; when a nation of shepherds and robbers appeared as the depositary of

letters, after they had been allowed to escape from the guardianship of every civilised people.

The principal historical luminary of the West, after the fall of the Roman empire, was Gregory, bishop of Tours, who died in 595. His ecclesiastical history, carried down to the year 591, is the only source from which, notwithstanding his ignorance and intolerance, and the want of order in his narrative, we derive any knowledge of the manners, the opinions, and the form of government of the period of which he treats. After him, another author, far more barbarous, and more concise, whose name is believed to have been Fredegair, continued the history of the Franks to the year 641; and he, like his predecessor, has shed a feeble light, not only upon Gaul, but upon Germany, Italy, and Spain. After Fredegair, nothing is to be found which deserves the name of history, until the time of Charlemagne. A century and a half passed away, during which we possess nothing concerning the whole empire of the West, except dates and conjectures.

For the East, in like manner, after the disappearance of the great light thrown upon history by the two contemporaries of Justinian, — Procopius and Agathias, our only resource is the narrative of Theophylact Simocatta, which is diffuse without being complete; inflated and loaded with superfluous ornaments, while it is barren of facts; and, as it ends about the year 603, we are then obliged to descend to the chronicles and abstracts of Theophanes and Nicephorus, both of whom died after Charlemagne, and who resemble each other in being occupied solely with chronology, not with the causes or effects of events.

This long and almost unknown period was not, however, without importance either in the East or in the West. Italy, under the dominion of the Lombards, whose first historian, Paul Warnefrid, was contemporary with Charlemagne, slowly recovered from its calamities. The Lombard kings, who were at first elective, and afterwards

hereditary, showed some respect for the liberty of their subjects, whether of Roman or Teutonic origin. Their laws, considered as the laws of a barbarous people, were wise and equal: their dukes, or provincial rulers, early acquired a sentiment of pride and independence, which made them seek support in the affection of their subjects.

We shall not here set forth the chronology of the one and twenty Lombard kings, who succeeded each other during the space of two hundred and six years—from the conquest of Alboin in 568, to the renewal of their monarchy by Charlemagne in 774. Their names would soon escape from the memory, and their history is not circumstantial enough for us to fix them in our minds by reflections suggested by facts. We only know, that during this period, the population of Italy began once more to increase; that the race of the conquerors took root and throve in the soil, without entirely superseding that of the conquered natives, whose language still prevailed; that the rural districts were cultivated anew, and towns rebuilt—particularly Pavia, the capital of the kingdom, and Benevento, the capital of the most powerful duchy of Lombardy, extending over great part of the kingdom of Naples;—that those arts which sweeten life were once more exercised by the inhabitants of Italy; and that the Lombards, who began their career of civilisation later than the Franks, outstripped them in it, and soon brought themselves to consider their neighbours as barbarians.

This period would be still more important in the history of the Franks, if it were better known. Chlothaire II., the son of Chilperic, and the great grandchild of Clovis, had been proclaimed king, in 613, by the whole monarchy. His power extended not only over all the Gauls to the Pyrenees, but was acknowledged throughout Germany, even by those Saxons whom Charlemagne had afterwards so much difficulty in subduing. The kingdom of the Franks had become the boundary of the new empire which the Avars had established in Tran-

sylvania and Hungary, and which, at Constantinople, threatened the Greeks with total ruin. During the fifteen years of his reign over this vast Frankic empire (A.D. 613—628), Chlothaire seems to have been little disturbed by foreign war. He reposed upon his strength, his neighbours feared him, and the Lombards themselves had consented to pay him a tribute. From the number of temples and convents with which the piety of Chlothaire and his son covered the kingdom, and from the silk, stuffs, and jewellery with which these buildings were decorated, it appears that the arts had made considerable progress in Gaul. Commerce had also acquired fresh activity: a desire for the spices of the Indies, and the manufactures of Greece, was universally felt by those magnates among the Franks whose wants were not satisfied by the natural products of their immense domains. Some of these chiefs undertook to carry on trade with arms in their hands, and to establish a communication between France and Greece by the valley of the Danube. The merchants set out from Bavaria, which was at the extremity of the empire of the Franks, and advanced to the Euxine, passing between the Avars and the Bulgarians, incessantly threatened with pillage, but always ready to defend with the sword the convoys which they escorted across those wild countries. A Frank merchant, by name Samo, was conspicuous for bravery in protecting these caravans: he rendered important services to the Venedi, a Slavonic people, who inhabited Bohemia; they rewarded him by making him their king, in which office he continued thirty-five years.

But notwithstanding the vast extent of the Frankic empire, the royal authority was hardly felt out of the presence of the king. All the Germanic nations had hereditary dukes, who paid an obedience, scarcely more than nominal, to Chlothaire, and his successor Dagobert. The southern provinces of Gaul were governed by the authority of their dukes, whom the king undoubtedly possessed the right of changing, but whom, in fact, he rarely



ventured to dismiss. It was only in the two provinces of Austrasia and Neustria that he felt himself completely king. He resided in the latter, generally at Paris ; and, to maintain his authority in the former, he sent thither the elder of his sons, Dagobert, whom he created king in 622, when this young prince was but fifteen years of age. Dagobert fixed his residence at Metz, under the protection of Arnolf and Pepin, two of the most powerful lords of Austrasia beyond the Rhine, and ancestors of the Carlovingian line.

In 628, Chlothaire II. died, and Dagobert succeeded him. Chlothaire allotted the kingdom of Aquitaine to a younger son, named Charibert, whom he had by another wife ; but he did not retain it. Dagobert had sole dominion over the empire of the Franks from 628 to 638, and exercised a degree of power almost equal to that which Charlemagne possessed at a later period.

Dagobert is described as having qualities which it is impossible to reconcile : first, we hear of his extreme moderation, of his mildness, of his deference to the authority of Pepin and St. Arnolf, bishop of Metz ; yet, at the very same period, we find him causing the assassination of Chrodoald, one of the dukes of Bavaria, who had been powerfully recommended to him by his father. Mention is made of a progress which he undertook throughout his kingdom on taking possession of it, and of the manifestations of his love of justice and humanity ; but let us attend to the words of Fredegair himself. “ From thence he took the road for Dijon and St. Jean de Losne, where he abode for some days, with a firm resolution to judge the people of his kingdom according to justice. Full of this beneficent desire, he yielded not his eyes to sleep, nor did he satisfy himself with food ; having no other object of his thoughts, than the hope that all might retire from his presence satisfied after having obtained justice. The same day, when he was leaving St. Jean de Losne for Châlons, he went into the bath before it was well day ; and at the same time he ordered Brodulf, the uncle of his brother

Charibert, to be put to death." The same historian declares Brodulf to have been one of the most estimable men of his kingdom.

In like manner, we are told of his wisdom, and the purity of his morals; but it is added, that a great change took place in this respect within the first year of his reign, when, according to Fredegaire, "he gave himself up to voluptuousness, and had, like king Solomon, three queens and a great number of concubines. The queens were Nantechilde, Wolfegonde, and Berchilde; as for the names of the mistresses, as they were very numerous, I have shrunk from the fatigue of inserting them in this chronicle."

Two cruel actions of Dagobert, which are not accounted for, have left a deeper stain upon his memory than the licentiousness of his manners. On the death of his brother, he caused his nephew, who was still a child, to be killed, lest he should one day claim his inheritance. The other is a deed of still greater atrocity: in one night he massacred nine thousand Bulgarians to whom he had granted hospitality, lest his sheltering them should give offence to the Avars, from whose sword these unhappy fugitives had escaped.

Dagobert was the benefactor of the abbey of St. Denis, and the founder of a great number of rich convents. Of course, his piety has been celebrated by the monks; but it was piety according to the interpretation of the seventh century, and displayed itself in nothing but in the largesses he bestowed on convents. This piety had united Dagobert to two saints whom France still venerates, though little acquainted with their claims to canonisation. The first was St. Eloi, the king's jeweller; who, under his eyes, and according to his orders, made all the ornaments of the church of St. Denis, and who thought himself permitted to commit saintly robbery upon the royal treasury, in order to enrich the convent of Solignac, which he himself had founded. The second was St. Ouen, formerly referendary of the court, afterwards bishop of Rouen. Dagobert lived alternately with these

two holy men, whose counsels he blindly followed ; with the monks of St. Denis, in whose choir he sang ; and among his numerous mistresses. His devotion to St. Denis was so exclusive, that he several times countenanced the pillage of other churches in his states, in order to enrich his favourite saint.

At the death of Dagobert begins the succession of the *Fainéans* kings, which lasted for a hundred and fourteen years (A. D. 638—752), during which period thirteen sovereigns reigned successively over the whole of France, or over a part of that monarchy ; though only two of them attained to man's estate, and not one to the full developement of his intellectual powers. The great justiciary, the Mord Dom, commonly called the mayor of the palace, and whose office had been instituted at a very early period in the three monarchies of Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgundy, could not, like the king, be a minor or an idiot, since he was elected by the people. The increase of his power was commensurate to the incapacity of his nominal chief. The minority of the two sons of Dagobert afforded a favourable opportunity to the mayor of making himself known to the nation, and of increasing his own influence. The inactivity in which the sovereign lived, the corrupting influence of power, and the example of his predecessors, soon led him into the most shameless excesses. There was not a Merovingian king that was not a father before the age of fifteen, and decrepit at thirty. This great stipendiary of the nation, who took no part in the government, except in as much as the uncontrolled disposal of the lands and estates of the crown was concerned, lived in a state of continual intoxication : he was known to his subjects only by his vices ; yet the rapidity with which one child succeeded another upon the throne, appears to have excited no suspicions in the minds of the Franks as to the causes of this constant recurrence of premature deaths.

A new subject of discussion began about this time to divide the Frankic nation : the small land-owners, who were called *Arimans*, or freemen, had hitherto

allowed the nobles and the dukes to usurp their rights. They had for a long while submitted to be plundered, one by one ; and had even aided the cause of their oppressors, becoming their leudes or followers, upon a promise of mutual assistance. But about the middle of the seventh century, some more open aggression on the part of the nobles, or some more audacious attempts to rob the freemen of their estates and of their rights, drove them to combine for their common defence. They had already given up the struggle in Austrasia, where the family of Charlemagne (which, as it has no other name, we shall henceforward style the Carlovingian race) was at the head of the high aristocracy. This family had acquired immense power ; and had succeeded in rallying the majority of the freemen around its standard, in the capacity of leudes : in Neustria, on the contrary, the freemen had preserved their independence ; they attended the national assemblies, and decided the election of the Mord Dom, who seems to have been appointed for the express purpose of protecting the lower orders, and who was perhaps chosen from their ranks, like the *Justiza* of Aragon. In 656, they succeeded in raising Ebroin to this important station ; a man of great talents and energy, and a determined foe to the increasing influence of the aristocracy, whose sole object, as judge, as general, and as statesman, was to weaken the dukes, and to ruin the nobles.

The two factions soon perceived that it was expedient to extend their alliances from one kingdom to the other. The freemen of Austrasia, being oppressed by the mayor Wulfoad, who was of a ducal family, had recourse to the protection of Ebroin, and frequently joined his standard : whilst the dukes of Neustria and Burgundy, and the leader of their party, Leger bishop of Autun, intrigued against Ebroin, and kept up a correspondence with the nobles of Austrasia. They turned their attention particularly towards young Pepin of Heristal, maternal grandson of Pepin, the minister of Dagobert, and grandfather of Pepin le Bref, king of

France. The administration of Ebroin (A. D. 656—689) was marked by frequent wars in both the kingdoms. Several kings were deposed on both sides, although, from their tender age, they had scarcely taken any other part in passing events than the giving them the sanction of their name. The nobility, however, were not satisfied with dethroning a sovereign who was displeasing to them. Their victories in Austrasia and Neustria were followed by regicide. Dagobert II. was attacked by the nobles in Austrasia in 678, and being condemned by a council, was put to death. St. Wilfrid, who had offered him hospitality in his infancy, was arrested by the army of Austrasians who returned from accomplishing this revolution; and a bishop who recognised him, addressed him thus:—“With what rash confidence do you venture to traverse the land of the Franks; you, who are worthy of death for having contributed to send back from his exile that king, who was the destroyer of our cities, and the contemner of his nobles’ counsels; who, like Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, oppressed the people with exactions; who respected not the churches of God, nor the bishops. — Now he has paid the penalty of his crimes; he is slain, and his body lies unburied on the earth.”

The same party, headed by the bishops and nobles, were equally merciless to Childeric II. At the period when this Neustrian king arrived at the age of twenty-one, and gave himself up to that unbridled love of pleasure, which was the hereditary propensity of his race, Ebroin, and Leger bishop of Autun, who were the chiefs of the two parties, were confined in the same convent at Luxeuil, the superior of which had compelled them to be reconciled. But, within the walls of a cloister, the holy bishop did not abandon the cause of his party. He planned a conspiracy of which his brother Gaerin was the leader. Childeric II. was surprised (in 673) as he was hunting in the forest of Livry, and, with his wife and infant son, put to death. This seemed to confirm the power of the aristocracy.

Ebroin, however, who had been released at the time of the Revolution, found means to reassemble an army of freemen, and surprised the nobles at Pont St. Maxence: he defeated them several times, and took prisoner almost all those who had borne a part in the death of Childeric II., which he avenged by putting them to the torture. St. Leger, after being exposed to cruel torments, was preserved alive; his biographers assert that all his wounds closed instantaneously and miraculously, and that, when his lips and tongue were slit, he spoke with greater eloquence than before. Deprived of sight, and mutilated in all his limbs, St. Leger was already venerated as a martyr by the people. Ebroin's anger redoubled, when he perceived that all the evil he had inflicted on his enemy redounded to his glory. He resolved to have St. Leger degraded by the bishops of France, whom he assembled in council in 678, and cited the saint to confess before all the prelates that he was an accomplice in the murder of Childeric II. The holy St. Leger neither chose to stain the close of his life by an act of perjury, nor to bring upon himself new sufferings by avowing his participation in the regicide; he, therefore, made no other answer to all the questions put to him, than that God alone could read the secrets of his heart. The bishops, being able to extort no other answer from him, tore his tunic from top to bottom, as a mark of degradation, and delivered him up to the count of the palace, who ordered him to be beheaded. The commemoration of the martyrdom of the holy regicide is kept on the 2d of October; and there are few of the cities of France in which some church has not been raised in honour of him.

After the death of Ebroin, which took place in 681, the mayors, who were appointed his successors by the free party, possessed neither the same energy nor the same talent. War was renewed between Austrasia and Neustria. From the time of the murder of Dagobert II., the former had been without a king, and had

obeyed Pepin of Heristal, who took the title of duke, and governed with the assistance of the nobility. A great battle was fought between the two nations and the two parties in 687, at Testry, in Vermandois. The nobles were triumphant. The mayor of the freemen was killed, and their king, Thierry III., fell into the hands of the nobles. Pepin, who thought it still necessary that there should be the phantom of a king, instead of dethroning him, attached him to his own party, and caused him to be acknowledged in Austrasia, as well as in Neustria, at the same time retaining all authority in his own hands. He elevated his son to the dignity of mayor of Neustria, and reduced the king to the condition of captive of his own subject.

The great revolution, which transmitted the sovereignty of the Franks from the first to the second race, takes its date from the battle of Testry. In the year 687, the royal power was vested in the second Pepin, although his grandson, the third of the name, was the first who assumed the crown (A. D. 752). This revolution has been erroneously considered as an usurpation on the part of the mayors of the palace: it was, on the contrary, their defeat; their old adversaries were victorious, and decorated themselves with their title. The Mord Dom, or elective head of the freemen, chief magistrate of Neustria, and representative of a country in which the Franks had begun to blend with the Romans and adopt their language, gave place to the hereditary duke of Austrasia, captain of his leudes, or men voluntarily devoted to a service equally hereditary, and requited by grants of land. This duke was seconded by all the other dukes who fought for aristocracy, and against royalty and the people. His victory was signalled by a second triumph of the Teutonic language over the Latin; by the re-establishment of diets or assemblies of the nation, which were, from that period, held in a far more regular manner, and gradually got possession of all the rights of sovereignty; but in which the nobles alone represented the nation:



lastly, by the almost entire dissolution of the national bond. The dukes who had seconded Pepin had in view, not to become his subjects, but to reign conjointly with him ; accordingly, all the nations beyond the Rhine renounced their obedience to the Franks ; Aquitaine, Provence, and Burgundy, governed by their several dukes, became, in some sort, foreign provinces ; and Pepin, satisfied with leaving either his son or one of his lieutenants at Paris to watch the king, transported the actual seat of government to his duchy of Austrasia, and fixed his residence by turns at Cologne, and at Heristal, near Liege.

It was towards the close of the administration of Pepin of Heristal that the Musulmans began to threaten Western Europe. They conquered Spain, between the years 711 and 714, and Pepin died on the 16th of December, 714, after having governed France twenty-seven years and a half, from the day of the battle of Testry. But, before we attempt to trace the rise and progress of the Musulman empire ; before we examine how Charles Martel, the son of Pepin, saved the West from their dominion, we must follow the obscure revolutions of the Eastern empire up to the time when her mortal struggle with the invaders began.

It is not the only disadvantage attending the study of the arid period which now engages our attention, that we are forced to carry our eyes over the whole world, from its eastern to its western bounds, and to pass in review persons who had no relation to each other. The brief chronicles to which we are reduced, devoid of all historical criticism or judgment, heap up before our eyes events of which we cannot see the connection, and which appear rather to contradict than to support each other ; becoming, of course, difficult to remember, in proportion to their barrenness and obscurity.

The history of the East, during the five reigns of Justin II., Tiberius II., Maurice, Phocas, and Heraclius (A. D. 567—642), presents us rather with the phantoms of a bad dream than with a train of real events. The three

former, it is true, offer a contrast to which we ought to be accustomed,—that of sovereigns virtuous, or represented as being so, and a miserable people. It is, indeed, generally thus that the historians of monarchies have performed their tasks. But the tyranny of Phocas, the defeats and afterwards the victories of Heraclius, have no resemblance to any course of events with which we are acquainted, and afford no internal explanation. In a war, of which the details are wholly unknown to us, the Persians, under the orders of Chosroes II., conquered all the Asian provinces of the Eastern empire. Heraclius, in his turn, conquered the whole of Persia, up to the frontiers of India ; and, after expeditions, the narratives of which wear the air of fables, the two empires, equally exhausted, were unable to contend with a new enemy, whose existence they had not even suspected.

Though reduced to conjecture as to the origin of these sudden revolutions, we can at least discover that a great cause of weakness had arisen in the Eastern empire, along with the new systems of religious belief, and the unrelenting persecutions they engendered. The minds of men became irritated against each other, and ill-disposed towards their government. The oppressed sects not only refused to defend their country, they intrigued with their country's enemies, and delivered into their hands the strongest and richest provinces of the empire. In the discussions on the mysteries of the Christian faith must be sought the key to the Persian and Musulman conquests.

The groundwork of the new revolutions which broke out at the end of the sixth century was laid in the reign of Justinian. The ancient dispute between the catholics and the Arians concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ had been succeeded by others far more frivolous and unintelligible, more foreign to all human actions, and to the influence of faith upon conduct,—those concerning the union of the two natures and two wills in the person of the Saviour.

It was not without reason that the question, whether

the Redeemer was God, or whether he was a created being, was regarded as fundamental in the Christian religion. For, according to the explanation given of this mystery, one sect reproached the other with refusing, if not to Deity itself, certainly to one of its manifestations, the worship which is its due ; while the opposing sect accused its adversaries of violating the first of the commandments, the very basis of religion, by adoring him who had expressly taught them to worship the Father only, the King of kings. But, though the dogma of the divinity of Christ had prevailed in the catholic church, the explanation of the incomprehensible union of the Deity with man was absolutely null as to its consequences : it might be enounced in words, but human reason was unable to grasp it ; still less could it have any effect in guiding the actions of men.

Nevertheless, two explanations of this mystery had been brought forward ; the one, that of the *Monophysites*, represented the Deity as being the soul which animated the human body of Jesus Christ. According to this system, the soul of the Saviour possessed but one nature, and that divine ; his body, also, was of one nature, and that human. This system, which did not escape the charge of heresy, had been embraced by Justinian, and, more warmly still, by his wife Theodora, in whom licentiousness and cruelty had not extinguished theological zeal. The bishops, the monks, and the laity, who refused to subscribe to it, were exposed to a bloody persecution. The orthodox system, on the contrary, acknowledged in Jesus Christ the union of two complete natures ; that is, of the human soul and human body of Jesus the son of Mary, with the divine soul and divine body of the Christ, one of the three persons of the Deity. These two complete and distinct beings were, however, so intimately united, that nothing could be attributed to the Man, which was not, at the same time, attributed to the God.

From this explanation arose a new dispute about words. It was asked, whether this twofold Being was animated

by a single will ; the divine soul prevailing so completely over the human, as undividedly to govern the actions of Christ. In the opinion of the *Monothelites* it was so. This was declared heretical, and the orthodox dogma was established, that the human soul of Jesus had a full and entire will, but that it remained in perpetual conformity to the full and entire will of the divine soul of Christ.

With the utmost stretch of attention, we are scarcely able to seize these subtle distinctions, which aim at setting in opposition unknown causes, whose effects are always the same. The examination of them fatigues the reason, and appears a sort of blasphemy against that inscrutable Being, who is thus submitted to a kind of moral dissection. With more difficulty still should we pursue the different shades of these opinions, and all the various sects to which they gave rise. But the influence of these subtle questions was fatal to the empire : every sect persecuted in its turn, and the orthodox, — that is to say, the victorious — abused, more cruelly than the others, the power which they were longer able to retain. The first dignitaries of the church were expelled from their seats ; many perished in exile, many in prison, many were even sentenced to death. Those who held the forbidden opinions were denied the liberty of worship ; while the property of the condemned churches was seized, and thousands of monks, fighting with staves and stones, excited tumults in which rivers of blood were shed. Large towns were given up to pillage, and to all the outrages of a brutal soldiery ; and all this as a punishment for an attachment to words rather than to ideas. At the end of the sixth century, the greater part of the empire, especially the eastern, longed for a foreign deliverer, — even for the yoke of a heathen or a magian, so that they might escape from the intolerance of the orthodox party and of the emperors.

The Nestorians, who carried farther than the orthodox themselves the separation between the two natures ; who placed in stronger opposition than the

catholics the Man Jesus and the God Christ, were the first objects of persecution: they completely abandoned the empire, and several hundred thousands of the subjects of Justinian emigrated into Persia, carrying with them arts and manufactures, and a knowledge of Roman tactics and engines of war. The conquests of Chosroes were seconded by their arms, and by the treachery of their secret adherents, who delivered up to the enemy several of the fortresses of Asia.

The Eutychians, the most zealous of the Monophysites, who, in order to maintain the unity of Christ's nature, denied that his divine soul had been invested with a human body, were crushed by persecution. They have survived only in Armenia, where their church flourishes to this day: but this heresy destroyed the ancient attachment of the Armenians to the Greeks, and produced in these old allies of the empire an implacable hatred, which has also been perpetuated. A modified sect of Monophysites, the Jacobites, sought refuge in Persia, in Arabia, and in Upper Egypt. They, too, united with the enemies of their country. In the mountains of Lebanon, the Monothelites, or those who admit only one will in Christ, raised the standard of revolt. These are still known by the name of Maronites. The Monophysites, who were oppressed and destroyed in the rest of the empire, raised an invincible resistance in Egypt, where the whole mass of the people shared their opinions. But these people, persecuted, stripped, and doomed to see the dignities of their church, their own possessions, and all their civil rights, torn from them, gave up at once the language of the Greeks, and their adherence to its church. Then arose the Coptic sect, and its independent church, which spread over Abyssinia and Nubia. They seconded with all their might the arms of Chosroes; and when he, in his turn, was conquered, they implored the aid of the Musulmans.

Such was the state of the East, and such were the only passions which seemed to agitate the people, during the five reigns which filled the interval from the death

of Justinian, in 567, to the conquests of the Muslims, in 632. We shall now give a succinct account of these five reigns, on which our scanty materials would not permit us to enlarge, even if we desired it.

The sceptre of Justinian had been transmitted, in 567, to his nephew Justin II., a prince of a mild and benevolent disposition, but weak: he saw the errors of his uncle's administration, and promised to remedy them; but he was constantly confined to his palace by bodily infirmity, and surrounded by women and eunuchs. Counsellors like these gave to his government a character of intrigue, of feebleness, of distrust. During his reign, Italy was lost by the conquest of the Lombards. The Avars, being driven by the aboriginal Turks from the neighbourhood of Thibet, and becoming conquerors as soon as they had passed from Asia into Europe, had founded their empire in the valley of the Danube, nearly on the same spot which Attila had formerly chosen as the seat of his government. From thence they extended their devastations throughout the Illyrian peninsula. Towards the end of the reign of the great Chosroes Nushirvan, the Persians carried their ravages to the very outskirts of Antioch, and reduced to ashes the city of Apamea. At the end of his reign, however, Justin II. realised the hopes which he had excited at its commencement. He chose a successor, not in his own family, but in his people. Finding in the captain of his guards, Tiberius, the most virtuous, brave, and humane of his subjects, he raised him to the crown in December 574, and resigned to him the reins of government, without any attempt, during the four years which he survived this act of abdication, to recover the power he had resigned.

It is supposed that the empress Sophia, wife of Justin II., had some influence upon the choice of her husband. Tiberius was not only the bravest, but the handsomest of the courtiers. It was not known that he was married; and though Justin, as he placed him on the throne, said, "Reverence the empress Sophia as your



mother," Sophia is thought to have indulged a hope that she should attach him to herself by a different tie, and should bestow her hand, as well as a crown, upon the new emperor. But Tiberius now brought forward his wife Anastatia, whose existence had been hitherto concealed. From this time he strove, by his respectful attentions and filial affection to the empress, to make her forget the mortification she had endured. He found excuses for her resentment, and pardoned even the conspiracies into which her irritation led her ; and he granted,—what was then without example in the history of the empire,—a complete amnesty to all those who had taken up arms and proclaimed another emperor, as well as to the rival whom they had decorated with the purple. The reign of Tiberius is the first, since the conversion of Constantine, which gives us an idea of Christian virtues adorning the throne : —mildness, moderation, patience, charity. — Unhappily, this excellent prince survived Justin only four years : but, finding himself attacked by a mortal disease, he chose, in the same way in which he had been chosen,—not one of his family, but the man he thought most worthy, to inherit the supreme power. The successor and adopted son of Tiberius was Maurice (A. D. 582—602), a general who had commanded the army in the war against the Persians. He was then forty-three years of age ; and, though his virtue was less pure than that of his predecessor, and his character had some taint of pride, of cruelty, of weakness, and of avarice, he was nevertheless worthy of the preference which had been given to him.

Maurice, who owed his elevation to his military character, and who had so deeply studied the art of war as to write a treatise upon tactics which has come down to our own time, did not attempt to lead his armies in person ; so completely had the effeminate life of Constantinople rendered the profession of the soldier incompatible with the dignity of the sovereign. He opposed but a feeble resistance to the Lombards, and was satisfied with merely strengthening the garrisons in



the small number of towns which he still held in Italy. His most formidable enemy, therefore, was Baian, the Khan of the Avars (A. D. 570—600), who seemed to have taken Attila for his model, and occupied his country, if not his palace. In the vast plains of Bulgaria, of Wallachia, and Pannonia, where he prevented all cultivation of the earth, it was almost impossible for a regular army to check or chastise the ravages of his wandering troops: they penetrated with impunity into the richest provinces of the empire, and almost every year carried terror to the walls of Constantinople; plundering in their course the treasures of the Greeks, and carrying off thousands of captives. After having insolently bartered peace for a tribute, and insulted the messengers of the emperor in his own country,—insulted Constantinople through the lips of her own ambassadors,—Baian made it his sport to violate the treaties which he had sworn to keep.

The relations of Maurice with the Persian empire were more advantageous. The great Chosroes Nushirvan had died in 579, having lived upwards of eighty years. His son Ormouz, who succeeded him (A. D. 579—590), rendered himself odious by every vice which could exhaust the patience even of Orientals. His avarice disgusted the troops; his caprice degraded the satraps of Persia, and his pretended justice had immolated, as he himself boasted, thirteen thousand victims. An insurrection broke out against him in the principal provinces of Persia: Maurice seconded it by sending a Roman army into Mesopotamia and Assyria; the Turks of Thibet advanced at the same time into Khorasan and Bactriana; and the monarchy of the Persians seemed already on the brink of ruin. Bahram, or Varanes, a general who had distinguished himself, under Nushirvan, by his skill and valour, saved the state by disobeying the orders of Ormouz. Alone, he undertook the wars against the Turks and against the Romans: he conquered the former, and although he was less fortunate in his enterprise against the latter, he

still preserved his influence over the Persians. Ormouz having sent him an insulting message, implying that his services were no longer wanted, he raised the standard of revolt, took his sovereign prisoner, and exhibited to Persia the unwonted sight of a public trial, at which the captive son of Nushirvan pleaded his own cause before the nobles of the land. The unfortunate prince was by their orders deposed, blinded, and cast into prison, where he was strangled a short time afterwards by a personal enemy (A. D. 590).

One party among the Persians wished to transmit the crown to Chosroes II., son of Ormouz ; but Bahram refused to recognise him, and he was obliged to flee at the peril of his life, and to take refuge with the Romans. Maurice received the fugitive in a manner no less politic than generous, and spared him the fatigue and humiliation of a journey to Constantinople. He collected a considerable army on the frontiers of Armenia and Syria, the command of which he entrusted to Narses, a general of Persian origin, who is not to be confounded with the conqueror of Italy. The popular passions of the Persians were already kindled for a counter-revolution ; the magi had declared themselves against Bahram ; an army of the partisans of Chosroes had joined that of the Romans, which advanced to Zab on the frontiers of Media ; and the standards of the declining empire penetrated into regions which the Roman eagles had never beheld, either during the republic, or the reign of Trajan. Bahram was conquered in two battles, and perished in the eastern extremity of Persia : Chosroes was seated upon the throne, and, according to the custom of oriental despots, he cemented his restoration with the blood of numerous victims. He, however, still retained the army of auxiliaries which Maurice had furnished him with. He assumed the title of adopted son of the Roman emperor ; he restored several contested fortresses to Maurice ; he granted to the Christians of Persia that liberty of conscience which the magi had always refused them ; and the Greeks exulted

in the part they had taken in this revolution, as one of the most fortunate occurrences in their history.

They soon perceived, however, that a solid alliance must be based upon the friendship of nations, not merely on that of sovereigns. In the month of October, 602, Maurice attempted to reduce the pay of his soldiers, and to make them winter in the country of the Avars : a sedition instantly broke out, and the infuriated soldiers invested with the purple one of their centurions, named Phocas, who was only distinguished by the violence of his imprecations against the emperor. The monarch still hoped to defend himself in Constantinople ; but the people were no less exasperated at his parsimony than the army, and received him with a shower of stones. A monk ran through the streets sword in hand, denouncing him as the object of the wrath of God. Maurice, however, was accused of no heresy ; and, in an age where the affairs of the church were mingled with those of the state, he alone seems to have kept aloof from ecclesiastical quarrels. He fled to Chalcedonia, where he was soon taken by the officers of Phocas, who had just entered Constantinople in triumph. His five sons were butchered before his eyes : he himself perished the last ; and the six heads were exposed to the insults of the populace in the Hippodrome of Constantinople. A few months afterwards, the widow of Maurice and his three daughters were slaughtered in the same manner : but this was only the prelude to the execrable tyranny which Phocas was about to exercise over the empire for eight years (A. D. 602—610), during a reign not less remarkable for atrocity than those of Nero and Caligula.

Chosroes might, possibly, consider himself bound in gratitude to avenge the prince who had restored him to his throne. Be that as it may, his policy eagerly seized this pretext for declaring war on the Romans ; and the most opulent cities of the empire were laid waste by the sword of the Persians, to expiate a crime in which they had nowise participated. Chosroes II. employed several

campaigns in rendering himself master of the border towns ; and, as long as Phocas reigned, he did not pass the limits of the Euphrates. But Phocas himself fell ; the crime which Chosroes affected to avenge met its punishment : Heraclius, son of the exarch of Carthage, sailed with an African fleet, and was received in the port of Constantinople on the 5th of October, 610, with the title of Augustus. Phocas was given over to the most cruel tortures, and was afterwards beheaded ; but the new emperor in vain demanded of the Persian monarch a restoration of that peace between the two empires, which he had now no just cause for withholding.

It was precisely at this period that Chosroes, leaving the shores of the Euphrates, undertook the conquest of the Roman empire ; whilst Heraclius, whose long reign (A. D. 610—643,) we are only acquainted with through imperfect documents, passed twelve years in a state of inactivity and depression, which forms a strange contrast with the brilliant expeditions by which he afterwards distinguished himself. In 611, Chosroes occupied the most important cities of Syria, — Hierapolis, Chalcis, Beræa, and Aleppo. He took Antioch, the capital of the East : Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia, fell shortly afterwards. Chosroes devoted several campaigns to the conquest of Roman Asia ; but history does not furnish us with the details of any battle offered to check his progress, nor of any obstinate siege, nor with the name of any Roman general, distinguished even by his reverses. In 614, Palestine was invaded by the Persian armies ; Jerusalem opened its gates ; the churches were pillaged, 90,000 Christians were massacred, and the fire of the magi succeeded to the worship which had been offered on the altars of the true God. In 616, Egypt was also conquered : the Persians advanced into the deserts of Libya, and destroyed the remains of the ancient Greek colony of Cyrene, in the neighbourhood of Tripoli. During the same year another army crossed Asia Minor, to Chalcedonia, which yielded after a long siege ; and a Persian army maintained its position for ten years, within sight

of Constantinople, on the Bosphorus of Thrace. The whole empire seemed to be reduced within the walls of the capital ; for, about the same time, the Avars recommenced their ravages with more ferocity than ever, and occupied or laid waste the whole European continent, down to the long wall, which, at a distance of only thirty miles from Constantinople, separated that extremity of Thrace from the mainland. Certain maritime towns, sprinkled at vast distances over all the coasts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, still recognised the nominal authority of the emperors ; but their own situation was so precarious, that they could neither furnish money nor troops for distant expeditions. The final overthrow of the throne of Heraclius seemed only to be deferred for a few years.

Then it was that the man, whose effeminate habits and depressed spirits had hitherto inspired nothing but contempt, all at once displayed the vigour of a young soldier, the energy of a hero, and the talents of a conqueror. The meagre chronicles which relate the annals of the reign of Heraclius, neither explain his successes, nor throw light on his previous reverses : they neither tell us why he seemed to slumber for twelve years upon a throne which was crumbling to dust beneath him, nor why he suddenly awoke, in all the greatness of his energy, to crush the Persians in the course of six years (A. D. 622—627) ; nor how he came to relapse into the same apathy, and to lose, by the arms of the Musulmans,<sup>1</sup> during the last fourteen years of his reign, all that he had before regained (A. D. 628—642).

Reduced as we are to a merely conjectural solution of this historical problem, we are led to imagine that the reverses of the empire were owing to the universal discontent of its subjects ; to the prevalence of religious animosities, and to a resentment for unjust persecution, which induced the heretics of every province to desire a bold avenger even more than a good king. But after the Monophysites, the Monothelites, the Eutychians, the Nestorians, the Jacobites, and the Maronites, had

gratified their hatred of the church and of the state by delivering their fortresses and their country into the hands of the magi, the ruin of their former enemy soon ceased to console them for their present oppression. They regretted that national independence and that country which they had lost ; they appealed to that Heraclius whom they had betrayed. The emperor had been destined by nature for the part of a great man ; and, although the pomp of royalty, the influence of courtiers, eunuchs, and women, had lulled him in the lap of luxury, he readily perceived the real weakness of an empire whose resources were weakened by conquest. He saw that it was impossible for the Persian armies, which were dispersed over the immense extent of the Roman provinces, to arrive in time to succour each other ; that they must be in constant dread of a rebellion ; and that the troops would not dare to leave their remote quarters to support the central forces. Instead of attacking the Persian army, which lay before his eyes in Chalcedonia, at the very gates of his capital, he embarked with all the soldiers he could muster, and landed in Cilicia, at the angle which Asia Minor forms with Syria. Ten years of magian oppression had taught the inhabitants to regret the sway of the Eastern empire. Heraclius reinforced his army with such of the natives as had courage to shake off the yoke. Instead of seeking to meet the Persians, he attempted to cut them off in their rear ; and, with a degree of skill and boldness which deserves to be better known, he long avoided them, and ravaged the very countries which they had left behind them. Whilst the whole empire of the East was occupied by the Persians, he led the Roman armies into the heart of Persia : he even penetrated into regions of whose existence the Greeks had hitherto been ignorant, and where no European conqueror had ever set foot. After having laid waste the shores of the Caspian Sea, he successively attacked, took, and burned the several capitals of Chosroes, even as far as Ispahan : he extinguished the eternal fire of the magi ; he loaded

his troops with an enormous booty ; and he retaliated on Persia the same disasters which Chosroes had, for ten years, inflicted upon the empire.

Heraclius did not cease to offer peace, even in the midst of this career of destruction ; while the haughty monarch as constantly rejected it, in the midst of his disasters and defeats. The Persians at length refused to submit to the extreme sufferings which were the consequences of his obstinacy, and of his weakness. An insurrection broke out against the king, on the 25th of February, 628, and Chosroes was assassinated, with eighteen of his sons. One only of his offspring, Siroes, was allowed to live, and to occupy his father's throne. Peace was restored between Constantinople and Persia ; and the ancient boundaries of the two empires on the Euphrates were recognised by both parties. But the whole of Asia had been devastated by this double invasion ; and the conqueror, who, meantime, was gathering strength in Arabia, met with but slight resistance, when, in the following year (629), he began to inundate the exhausted land with the victorious torrent of the Musulman armies.

Leslie,

I am in love  
with you and  
your large pink pussy  
lip.



## CHAP. XIII.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF ARABIA.—YEMEN.—REPUBLICS OF THE RED SEA.—ARAB CHARACTER, INSTITUTIONS, POETRY, AND RELIGION.—WORSHIP OF THE KAABA AT MECCA.—BIRTH OF MOHAMMED.—HIS MARRIAGE.—HIS RELIGIOUS STUDIES.—PUBLICATION OF THE KORAN.—CHARACTER OF HIS RELIGION.—HIS PUBLIC PREACHING.—HIS EARLY DISCIPLES.—IRRITATION OF THE INHABITANTS OF MECCA.—FLIGHT OF MOHAMMED TO MEDINA; HEGIRA, OR ERA OF THE MUSULMAN RELIGION.—COMMENCEMENT OF HIS REIGN.—HIS MILITARY TALENTS.—CONQUEST OF MECCA.—CONQUEST OF THE REST OF ARABIA.—DECLARATION OF WAR WITH THE EMPIRE.—DECLINE OF MOHAMMED'S HEALTH.—HIS LAST WORDS.—HIS DEATH. (A. D. 569—632.)

THE great peninsula of Arabia, which extends from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, and from the frontiers of Syria to the shores of the Southern Ocean, forms a distinct world, in which man and beast, the heavens and the earth, wear a peculiar aspect, and are governed by peculiar laws:—every thing recalls the eternal independence of an autochthonous people: the ancient traditions are purely national, and a civilisation of a character entirely peculiar, has been attained without any impulse or assistance from foreign nations.

The extent of Arabia is nearly four times that of France; but this vast continent, through which no river takes its course; in which no mountain raises its head high enough to collect the clouds, or to disperse them in rain, or to garner up the snows for the refreshment of these burning plains, is scorched with perpetual drought. The very earth is parched; scantily clothed with a short-lived vegetation during the rainy season, it is reduced to dust as soon as the sun regains his unclouded power. The winds, which sweep

across its boundless plains, bear along mountains of sand, which constantly threaten to swallow up the works of man, and often bury the traveller in a living grave. A few springs, which the industry of man or the instinct of animals has discovered, and whose waters have been carefully collected and sheltered in cisterns or deep wells by that antique charity, that disinterested benevolence, which prompts an individual to labour for an unknown posterity, mark, at long intervals, the spots where the life of man may be preserved. They are as distant as the cities of Europe; and in the itinerary of the various caravans, more than half the daily stations are without water. Besides these cisterns, however, other springs which have escaped the eye of man, or have not been sheltered by his labours, preserve their waters for the wild beasts of the desert; for the lions and tigers whose thirst is more frequently quenched with blood; and for the antelopes which flee at their approach.

The mountains, seared and stripped by the fervour of the sun and the violence of the winds, here and there rear their naked heads; but if any of them are lofty enough to attract the clouds and to draw down refreshing showers, or if any slender rivulet trickles down its barren sides before it loses itself in the boundless sands, a luxuriant fertility marks its whole track: there, the power of a burning sun vivifies what it elsewhere destroys; an island of verdure arises in the midst of the desert; groves of palms cover the sacred source; all the lower animals assemble there, unawed by man, whose empire appears to them less formidable than that of the desert from which they have fled, and they submit to his control with a readiness unknown in other climes. These mountains, these living springs, these oases, are scattered but rarely over the vast surface of Arabia; but along the coasts of the Red Sea some spots are marked by more abundant waters, and here flourishing cities have arisen from the earliest antiquity; whilst, at the extremity of the peninsula, on the

shores of the ocean, the kingdom of Yemen, and the part called by Europeans Arabia the Happy, are watered by copious streams, carefully cultivated, covered with coffee-trees, and spice and incense bearing shrubs, whose perfumes are said to be wafted out to sea, and to salute the approaching mariner.

The race of men who inhabit this region, so unlike every other, are gifted by nature with the vigour and endurance necessary to triumph over the obstacles and the evils with which they have to struggle. Muscular, agile, sober, patient, the Arab, like his faithful companion the camel, can endure thirst and hunger; a few dates, or a little ground barley, which he steeps with water in his hand, suffice for his nourishment. Fresh and pure water is for him so rare, it seems to him so great a bounty of Heaven, that he thinks not of ardent liquors. His faculties are employed in becoming thoroughly acquainted with the region he has to subjugate; and the pathless desert, the moving columns of sand, the parching and poisonous breath of the Samum, strike him neither with amazement nor with dread. He boldly traverses the desert in search of whatever riches are to be found in it; he subdues all the animals that dwell in it; or rather, he shares with them, as friends, whatever can be wrested from a niggard nature. He guides their intelligence to collect and to preserve the scanty food which Arabia produces; and while he profits by their labours, he preserves the nobleness of their character. The horse lives in the midst of his children; his intelligence is constantly called forth by the society of man, and he obeys rather from affection than from fear. The camel lends him his strength, and his patience, and enables him to carry on an active commerce in a country which nature seemed to have cut off from all communication with the rest of the world.

It is only by the triumph of industry and of courage that man can exist in Arabia, in a constant struggle with nature; he could not exist if he had likewise to struggle against despotism. The Arab has always

been free, he will always be free ; for, with him, the loss of liberty would be almost immediately followed by the loss of existence. How could the maintenance of kings or of armies be extracted out of the labour which scarcely suffices to supply himself with the means of subsistence ? The inhabitant of Arabia Felix alone has not received from nature this stern security for freedom. In Yemen there are absolute kings. Indeed this country has more than once been exposed to foreign conquest ; but the cities on the banks of the Red Sea are republics, and the Arab of the desert knows no other government than the patriarchal one. The scheik, the patriarch of the tribe, is regarded as father ; all the members of it call themselves his children ; a figure of speech adopted by other governments, but in Arabia alone, little removed from reality. The scheik counsels his children, he does not command them ; the resolutions of the tribe are formed in the assembly of elders ; and he who dissents from them, turns his horse's head to the desert, and goes on his solitary way. It is but here and there that a spot of Arabia is susceptible of cultivation. There alone can territorial property exist. Elsewhere the earth, like the air, belongs alike to all, and the fruits which she bears without culture are common to all. The frequent conflicts of the Beduin, who acknowledges no territorial property, with those who portioned out fields, enclosed them and claimed them as their own, have accustomed the former to pay little respect to the laws of property in general. Indeed he acknowledges none but those which govern his tribe ; the property of his brother, or that for which his brother has pledged his word, is alone sacred in his eyes : all other he regards as lawful prey ; and he exercises the profession of a robber without injury to his self respect, or to his own sense of morality or of law. He assails and partitions whatever foreign property comes within his reach. With him the words stranger and enemy are synonymous, unless the stranger have acquired the claims of a guest, have eaten salt at his table, or have come to seat himself with generous

confidence at his hearth. Then the person of the stranger becomes sacred in his eyes ; he will share his last morsel of bread, his last cup of water with him, and will defend him to the last moment of his own life.

Among other nations nobility is only the transmission of ancient wealth and power ; but the Beduin has none but moveable wealth, which he seldom long preserves ; he scorns to obey, and does not seek to command ; if, then, he respects antiquity of blood, if he carefully preserves his own genealogy, and that of his noble horses, it is only from reverence for the past, from the power of memory, and that force of imagination which is nourished by long solitude and leisure. The Arab is, of all mankind, the one whose mind is kept in the most constant activity. The history of his tribe is the rule of his conduct. Thrown by his wanderings into contact with men of all nations, he never forgets the evil or the good which his fathers have received at the hands of the fathers of those he encounters. In the total absence of all social power, of all guarantee for personal security afforded by magistrates or by laws, gratitude and revenge become the fundamental rules of his conduct. Education and habit have conspired to place them beyond the domain of reason, under the guardianship of honour and of a kind of religion. His gratitude is boundless in its devotion, his vengeance unchecked by pity ; it is as patient and artful as it is cruel, because it is kept alive by a sense of duty rather than by passion ; the study of past times, even the record of the genealogies of his race, serves as fuel to these two sentiments.

But the memory of the Arab is enriched by other recollections. The most intense of all the national pleasures is that of poetry ; a poetry very different from ours, breathing more impetuous desires, more burning passions, and uttered in a language more figurative, adorned with an imagination more unbridled. We are bad judges of its beauties or of its defects ; we ought, however, to admit that it is not the poetry of an uncivilised nation, but of a nation which, following a road to civilisation

different from that we have trod, has advanced as far as climate and other insurmountable obstacles would permit. The Arabic language has been constructed and polished with care, and the wanderer of the desert is sensible to the slightest want of delicacy, of purity, of expression. Eloquence had been cultivated as well as poetry ; and before that of the expositors of the law had acquired its full maturity under the reigns of the kaliphs, political eloquence had attained to a high perfection, both in the councils of the republics of the Red Sea, and under the tents of the desert, where the chieftains needed its aid to persuade those whom they knew it to be impossible to command.

Religion had still deeper influence over the imaginations of the Arabs than poetry ; this grave and ardent people, incessantly struggling with difficulties, having death always before their eyes, often exposed to those long and austere privations which exalt the soul of the cenobite, had, from all times, turned their meditations towards the remote and mysterious destinies of man, and his connection with the invisible world. The eldest religion of the earth, Judaism, had its birth almost within the limits of Arabia. Palestine is on its frontiers ; the Hebrews long inhabited the desert ; one of the sacred books (that of Job) was written by an Arab, in his native tongue ; and the origin of the Arabic nation, the descent from Ismael, the son of Abraham ; flattered the national pride. Numerous and powerful colonies of Jews were scattered over Arabia, where they freely exercised their religion. Still more numerous colonies of Christians had been successively introduced, by the furious persecutions set on foot in the empire against all the sects which had successively fallen off from orthodoxy in the long dissensions on the Arian controversy, and that of the two natures. Arabia was so completely free, that absolute toleration necessarily existed ; and all these refugee sects, and all the proselytes they could make among the Arabs, were on a footing of perfect equality. Finding it impossible to injure

each other, they were forced to live in peace ; and those who on the other side the frontier were incessantly occupied in denouncing each other to the tribunals, in reciprocally stripping each other of the rights of citizens and of men, seemed in Arabia to be restored to some feeling of charity.

But though Arabia had received within her bosom Jews, Christians of all sects, Magi, and Sabæans, she had also a national religion, a polytheism peculiar to herself. Its principal temple was the Kaaba at Mecca, where a black stone which had fallen from heaven was the object of veneration to the faithful, and the temple in which it was deposited was likewise adorned with three hundred and sixty idols. The guardianship of the Kaaba was entrusted to the family of the Koreishites, the most ancient and most illustrious race of the republic of Mecca ; and this sacerdotal dignity conferred on the head of the family the presidency over the councils of the republic. Pilgrims from all parts of Arabia devoutly repaired to Mecca to adore the sacred stone, and to deposit their offerings in the Kaaba ; and the inhabitants of Mecca, whose city, deprived of water and surrounded by a sterile region, had owed its prosperity to superstition rather than to commerce, were attached to the national faith with a zeal heightened by personal interest.

In the year 569 of our era, was born, of one of the most distinguished families of Arabia, a man who combined all the qualities which characterise his nation. Mohammed, the son of Abdallah, was of the race of the Koreishites, and of the particular branch of Hussein, to which the guardianship of the Kaaba and the presidency of the republic of Mecca were attached. Abd-al-Motaleb, the grandfather of Mohammed, had held these high dignities ; but he, as well as his son Abdallah, died before Mohammed arrived at man's estate. The presidency of Mecca passed to Abu Taleb, the eldest of his sons ; and Mohammed's portion of the paternal inheritance was reduced to five camels and a single slave.



At the age of twenty-five he engaged in the service of a rich and noble widow, named Khadijah, for whose commercial interests he made two journeys into Syria. His zeal and intelligence were soon rewarded with the hand of Khadijah. His wife was no longer young; and Mohammed, who was reputed the handsomest of the Koreishite race, and who had a passion for women which Arab morality does not condemn, and which polygamy, established by law, has sanctioned, proved the sincerity and tenderness of his gratitude, by his fidelity during a union of twenty-four years. As long as she lived, he gave her no rival.

Restored by his marriage to opulence and repose, Mohammed, whose character was austere, whose imagination was ardent, and whom his extreme sobriety, exceeding that of most anchorets, disposed to religious meditations and lofty reveries, had now no other thought, no other occupation, than to fix his own belief, to disengage it from the grosser superstitions of his country, and to elevate his mind to the knowledge of God. Grandson and nephew of the high priest of an idol, powerful and revered for his connection with the temple of the black stone, Mohammed beheld the divinity neither in this rude emblem nor in the idols made by the hand of man which surrounded it. He sought it in his soul; he recognised its existence as an eternal spirit, omnipresent, beneficent, and incapable of being represented by any corporeal image. After brooding over this sublime idea for fifteen years in solitude, after ripening it by meditation, after perhaps exalting his imagination by reveries, at the age of forty he resolved to become the reformer of his nation; he believed himself—so, at least, he affirmed—called to this work by a special mission of the divinity.

It would be an act of extreme injustice to persist in regarding as a mere impostor, and not as a reformer, the man who urged a whole nation onwards in the most important of all steps in the knowledge of truth; who led it from an absurd and degrading idolatry, from a

priestly slavery which compromised morality and opened a market for the redemption of every vice by expiations, to the knowledge of an omnipotent, omnipresent, and supremely good Being ;—of the true God, in short ; for since his attributes are the same, and he is acknowledged the sole object of worship, the God of the Musulmans is the God of the Christians. The profession of faith which Mohammed taught to his disciples, and which has been preserved unaltered to this day, is, that there is but one God, and that Mohammed is his prophet. Was he an impostor because he called himself a prophet ?

Even on this head, a melancholy experience of human weakness — of that mixture of enthusiasm and artifice which in all ages has characterised leaders of sects, and which we might perhaps find in our own times, and at no great distance from us, in men whose persuasion is undoubtedly sincere and whose zeal ardent, yet who assert or insinuate a claim to supernatural gifts which they do not possess—ought to teach us indulgence. An intense persuasion is easily confounded with an internal revelation ; the dreams of an excited imagination become sensible appearances ; faith in a future event seems to us like a prophecy ; we hesitate to remove an error which has arisen spontaneously within the mind of a true believer, when we think it favourable to his salvation ; after sparing his illusions, the next thing is to encourage them, and thus we arrive at pious frauds, which we fancy justified by their end, and by their effect. We easily persuade ourselves of what we have persuaded others ; and we believe in ourselves when those we love believe in us. Mohammed never pretended to the gift of miracles ; we need not go far to find preachers of our own days, who have founded no empires and yet are not so modest.

But the most perfect probity affords no security against the dangers of fanaticism, the intolerance which it engenders, nor the cruelty to which it leads. Mohammed was the reformer of the Arabs ; he taught them,

and he wished to teach them, the knowledge of the true God. Nevertheless, from the time he adopted the new character of prophet, his life lost its purity, his temper its mildness; policy entered into his religion, fraud mingled more and more with his conduct; and, at the close of his career, we can hardly explain to ourselves how he could be in good faith with himself.

Mohammed could not read; letters were not essential in Arabia to a good education: but his memory was adorned with all the most brilliant poetry of his native tongue, his style was pure and elegant, and his eloquence forcible and seductive. The Koran, which he dictated, is esteemed the masterpiece of Arabian literature; and the sublimity of the language affords to Musulmans sufficient evidence of the inspired character of its author, though, to readers of another faith, the traces of inspiration are not manifest. An admiration acquired in the earliest infancy for a work constantly present to the memory, constantly recalled by all the allusions of national literature, soon creates the very beauty it seems to find. The rarity of literary education seems to have inspired Mohammed with a sort of religious reverence for every book which pretended to inspiration. The authority of *The Book*, the authority of every thing written, is always great among semi-barbarous people; it is peculiarly so among the Musulmans. The books of the Jews, of the Christians, even of the Magi, raise those who make them the rule of their faith, above the rank of infidels in the eyes of the followers of Mohammed; and he himself, while he claimed the character of the greatest prophet of God, the Paraclete promised in Holy Writ, admitted six successive divine revelations — those of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Christ, and, as the final accomplishment of all, his own.

The religion of Mohammed does not consist in belief in dogmas alone, but in the practice of morality — in justice and charity. He has, it is true, shared the fate of other legislators who have tried to subject the vir-

tues of the heart to positive rules ; — the form has taken the place of the substance. Of all acts of religious legislation, the Koran is the one which has erected almsgiving into the most rigorous duty, and has given to it the most precise limits : it exacts from a tenth to a fifth of the income of every true believer, for works of charity. But the rule has been substituted for the sentiment ; the charity of the Musulman is an affair of personal calculation, directed entirely to his own salvation ; and the man who has scrupulously performed the duty of almsgiving, is not the less hard and cruel to his fellow-men.

Outward observances were especially necessary in a religion which, admitting no religious ceremonies, and even no order of priesthood except the guardians of the laws, seemed peculiarly exposed to danger from coldness and indifference. Preaching was the social observance ; prayer, ablution, fast, the individual observances, enjoined on Musulmans. To the very end of his life, Mohammed constantly preached to his people, either on Friday, the day he had specially set apart for religious worship, or on solemn occasions, — in all moments of danger, in all moments of inspiration. His inspiring and seductive eloquence contributed to increase the number of his followers, and to animate their zeal. After him, the early kaliphs, and all who enjoyed any authority among the faithful, continued these preachings or exhortations, often at the head of armies whose martial ardour they heightened by the aid of religious enthusiasm. Five times a day the Musulman is bound to utter a short and fervent prayer, expressed in words of his own, unfettered by any form or liturgy. As a means of fixing his attention, he is commanded to turn his face towards Mecca while he prays — towards that very temple of the Kaaba which was consecrated to idols, but which Mohammed, after having purified and hallowed it to the true God, regarded with the veneration it had so long commanded from his nation and his family. Personal cleanliness was prescribed as a

duty to the true believer who was about to present himself as a suppliant before God ; and ablution of the face and hands was the necessary preparation for every prayer. Yet, as Islamism was first proclaimed to a nation which dwelt in deserts where water was not to be found, the Koran permits the faithful, in case of extreme need, to substitute ablutions with sand. The fasts were very rigid, and admitted of no exception ; they bore the character of the sober and austere man who imposed them on his disciples. At all times and in all places, he forbade them the use of wine and of every sort of fermented liquor ; and during one month of the year, the Ramadan, which, according to the lunar calendar, falls in every month in succession, the Muslims, from sunrise to sunset, may neither eat nor drink, neither enjoy the luxury of the bath nor of perfumes, nor, in short, any gratification of the senses. Nevertheless, Mohammed, who imposed so rigid a penance on his disciples, was no advocate for an ascetic life ; he did not permit his companions to bind themselves by vows, nor would he suffer any monks in his religion : it was not till three hundred years after his death, that fakirs and derrickes arose, and this is one of the most important changes Islamism has undergone.

But the kind of abstinence on which Christian doctors have insisted the most, was that to which Mohammed was indifferent, or which he regarded with the greatest indulgence. Before his time the Arabs had enjoyed unbounded licence in love and marriage. Mohammed forbade incestuous unions ; he punished adultery and dissoluteness, and diminished the facility of divorce ; but he permitted every Musliman to have four wives or concubines, whose rights and privileges he defined by law. Raising himself alone, above the laws he had imposed on others, after the death of his first wife Khadijah, he married fifteen, or, according to other writers, seventeen wives in succession, all widows, with the exception of Ayesha, daughter of Abubekr. A fresh chapter of the Koran was

brought him by an angel to dispense him from submission to a law which, to us, seems so little severe.

His indulgence for this burning passion of the Arabian temperament, which he shared with his countrymen, further displayed itself in the nature of the future rewards he proclaimed as the sanctions of his religion. He described the forms of the judgment to come; in which the body, uniting itself anew to the soul, the sins and the good works of all who believed in God would be weighed, and rewarded or punished. With a tolerance rare in the leader of a sect, he declared, or at least he did not deny, that the followers of every religion might be saved, provided their actions were virtuous. But to the Musulman he promised, that whatever might have been his conduct, he would finally be received into paradise, after expiating his sins or his crimes in a state of purgatory, which would not exceed seven thousand years. The picture which he drew of purgatory and of hell differed little from those which other religions have presented to the terror of mankind. But his paradise was painted by an Arab imagination: groves, rivulets, flowers; perfumes under the shade of fresh and verdant groves; seventy black-eyed houris, gifted with immortal youth and dazzling beauty, solely occupied in administering to the enjoyments of each true believer; — such were the rewards promised to the faithful. Although some of Mohammed's most zealous disciples had been women, he abstained from declaring what sort of paradise was in store for them.

Among the articles of faith which Mohammed strove to inculcate on the minds of his followers, was one which acquired greater importance when he united the character of conqueror to that of prophet. In his endeavours to reconcile the inscrutable union of divine prescience with human liberty, he had leaned towards fatalism; but he never denied the influence of human will on human actions: he only taught his soldiers that the hour of death was determined beforehand, and that he who sought to escape it on the field of battle, would meet

it in his bed. But disjoining this idea from all others, by insisting little on any other kind of constraint imposed by divine prescience on the freewill of man, and inculcating this single position with undivided force (though fatalism to be rational ought to extend to every action of our lives), he inspired the Musulmans with an indifference to danger, he gave a security to their bravery, which we should seek in vain among soldiers, animated only by the nobler sentiments of honour and patriotism.

It was in the year 609, when Mohammed was already forty, that he began to preach his new doctrine at Mecca. He sought his first proselytes in his own family, and the influence he obtained over their minds affords sufficient evidence of the excellence of his domestic character. Khadijah was his first convert; then Seid, his slave; Ali, the son of Abu Taleb, his cousin; and Abubekr, one of the most considerable citizens of Mecca. Ten years were employed by Mohammed in slowly disseminating the new doctrine among his countrymen. All who adopted it became inflamed with the ardent faith of new converts. The prophet — that was the only name by which Mohammed was known among his disciples — seemed to them to speak the immediate word of the Divinity; he left not a doubt on their minds either as to the truths he revealed, or as to the fulfilment of his promises.

In the fourth year of his declared mission he appointed his cousin Ali, then not more than fourteen years old, his vizir; the empire he had to govern did not then extend over more than twenty followers.

Mohammed did not address himself to the citizens of Mecca alone. He waited at the Kaaba for the pilgrims who resorted thither from all parts of Arabia; he represented to them the incoherence and the grossness of the religious rites they came to practise; he appealed to their reason, and implored them to acknowledge the one God, invisible, all good, all powerful,—the



ruler of the universe,—instead of the black stone or the lifeless idols before which they prostrated themselves. The eloquence of Mohammed gained him proselytes ; but the citizens of Mecca were indignant at this attack on the sanctity of their peculiar temple ; this blow at the prosperity of their city, no less than at the authority of their religion, by the grandson of their high priest, the nephew of their chief magistrate. They called upon Abu Taleb to put an end to this scandal. Mohammed's uncle, at the same time that he opposed every possible resistance to the spread of his nephew's doctrine, would not suffer his life or his liberty to be attacked. Mohammed, supported by the family of Hashem against the remaining Koreishites, refused to submit to a decree of excommunication pronounced against him and fixed up in the temple. Aided by his disciples, he sustained a siege in his own house, repulsed the assailants, and kept his ground at Mecca till the death of Abu Taleb and of Khadijah. But when Abu Sophyan, of the branch of the Ommaiades, succeeded to the dignities of head of the republic and of religion, Mohammed clearly saw that flight was his only resource ; for already his enemies had agreed that he should be struck at the same instant by the sword of one member of every tribe, so that none might be peculiarly obnoxious to the vengeance of the Hashemites.

A refuge, however, was already prepared for Mohammed. His religion had made some progress in the rest of Arabia ; and the city of Medina, sixty miles to the north of Mecca, on the Arabian Gulf, had declared itself ready to receive him, and to acknowledge him as prophet and sovereign. But the flight was difficult — that celebrated flight called the Hegira, and which forms the grand era of the Musulman religion. The Koreishites watched Mohammed with the utmost vigilance ; they were, however, deceived by the brave and faithful Ali. In the full conviction that he was devoting himself to the poniards of the implacable foes of his leader

and friend, he placed himself in Mohammed's bed. Mohammed and Abubekr fled alone. In the deserts of Arabia, where there are few objects to break the monotonous line of the horizon, it is not easy to escape the eye of enemies well mounted and eager in pursuit. The two fugitives were on the point of falling into the hands of the Koreishites, when they found an asylum in the cavern of Thor, where they passed three days. Their pursuers advanced to the mouth of the cave; but seeing the web of a spider hanging unbroken across it, they concluded that no human being could have entered, and passed on. It was not till the heat of the pursuit had subsided, that Mohammed and Abubekr, mounted on two dromedaries which their partisans had procured, and accompanied by a chosen band of fugitives from Mecca, made their entry into Medina, on the 10th of October, A. D. 622, sixteen days after they had quitted the former city.

From this time Mohammed, who was now fifty-three years of age, was regarded not only as a prophet, but as a military sovereign. His religion assumed a different spirit; he no longer contented himself with the arts of persuasion, he assumed a tone of command. He declared that the season of long-suffering and patience was over; and that his mission, and that of every true believer, was to extend the empire of his religion by the sword, to destroy the temples of infidels, to obliterate all the monuments of idolatry, and to pursue unbelievers to the ends of the earth, without resting from so holy a work even on the days specially consecrated to religion.

“The sword,” said he, “is the key of heaven and of hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night passed under arms on his behalf, will be of more avail hereafter to the faithful, than two months of fasting and prayer. To whomsoever falls in battle, his sins shall be pardoned; at the day of judgment his wounds will shine with the splendour of vermilion; they will emit the fragrance of musk and of ambergris; and the

wings of angels and of the cherubim shall be the substitutes for the limbs he may have lost."

Nor were the glories of heaven the only rewards offered to the valour of the Musulmans: the riches of earth were also to be divided among them; and Mohammed from that time began to lead them on to the attack of the rich caravans which crossed the desert. His religion thus attracted the wandering Beduin, less from the sublime dogmas of the unity and spirituality of God, which it promulgated, than from the sanction it gave to pillage, and the rights it conferred on conquerors, not only over the wealth, but over the women and slaves of the conquered.

Yet at the very time that Mohammed shared the treasures won by the combined force of the believers, in his own person he did not depart from the antique simplicity of his life. His house and his mosque at Medina were wholly devoid of ornament; his garments were coarse; his food consisted of a few dates and a little barley bread; and he preached to the people every Friday, leaning on the trunk of a palm tree. It was not till after the lapse of many years, that he allowed himself the luxury of a wooden chair.

Mohammed's first battle was fought in 623, against the Koreishites in the valley of Bedr. He had tried to get possession of a rich caravan, headed by Abu Sophyan; the inhabitants of Mecca had assembled in a number greatly superior to that he commanded, with a view to deliver it: 350 Musulmans were opposed to 850 Koreishite infantry, seconded by 100 horse.

Such were the feeble means with which a war was carried on, which was soon to decide the fate of a large portion of the globe. The fanatical ardour of the Musulmans triumphed over the numerical superiority of their enemies. They believed that the succour of three thousand angels, led by the archangel Gabriel, had decided the fate of the battle. But Mohammed had not made the faith of his people dependent on success; the same year he was beaten at Ohud, six miles from Medina,

and himself wounded. In a public discourse he announced his defeat, and the death of seventy martyrs, who, he declared, had already entered into the joys of paradise.

Mohammed was indebted to the Jews for a part of his knowledge and of his religion, yet he entertained that hatred of them which seems to become more bitter between religious sects, in proportion as their differences are few, and their points of agreement many. Powerful colonies of that nation, rich, commercial, and utterly devoid of all the warlike virtues, had established themselves in Arabia, at a little distance from Medina: Mohammed attacked them in succession, from the year 623 to 627. He was not satisfied with partitioning their property, he gave up almost all the conquered to tortures which, in his other wars, rarely sullied the lustre of his arms.

But the object of Mohammed's most ardent desires was the conquest of Mecca. This city was, in his eyes, both the future seat of his religion, and his true country. There it was that he wished to restore the glory of his ancestors, and to surpass it by that which he had won for himself. His first attempts had little success, but every year added to the number of his proselytes: Omar, Khaled, Amru, who had distinguished themselves in the ranks of his enemies, successively went over to his banner; 10,000 Arabs of the desert swelled his ranks; and, in 629, Abu Sophyan was compelled to surrender to him the keys of the city. Eleven men and six women, who had been conspicuous among his ancient foes, were proscribed by Mohammed. This was little for the vengeance of an Arab. The Koreishites threw themselves at his feet. "What mercy can you expect," said he, "from a man whom you have so deeply offended?" — "We trust," replied they, "to the generosity of our kinsman." — "And you shall not trust in vain," said he; "you are free." The Kaaba was purified by his orders; all the inhabitants of Mecca embraced the religion of the Koran; and a perpetual

law prohibited any unbeliever from setting foot within the holy city.

Every step gained by the victor-prophet rendered the succeeding one less difficult ; and after the conquest of Mecca, that of the rest of Arabia cost him only three years (from 629 to 632). It was marked by the great victory of Hunain, and by the siege and the reduction of Tayef. His lieutenants advanced from the shores of the Red Sea to those of the ocean and of the Persian Gulf ; and at the period of Mohammed's last pilgrimage to the Kaaba, in 632, a hundred and fourteen thousand Musulmans marched under his banner.

During the six years of his reign, Mohammed fought in person at nine sieges or battles, and his lieutenants led on the army of the faithful in fifteen military expeditions. Almost all these were confined within the limits of Arabia ; but, in 629 or 630, Seid marched at the head of a Musulman army into Palestine ; and Heraclius, at the moment of his return from his brilliant campaigns, was attacked by an unknown enemy. The following year Mohammed advanced in person, at the head of 20,000 foot and 10,000 horse, on the road to Damascus, and formally declared war upon the Roman empire. It does not appear, however, that any battle was fought ; and perhaps his declining health induced him to disband his army.

Mohammed had now reached his sixty-third year : for four years the vigour of body which he had formerly displayed had seemed to desert him, yet he continued to discharge all the functions of a king, a general, and a prophet. A fever, which lasted a fortnight, accompanied with occasional delirium, was the immediate cause of his death. As he felt his danger, he recommended himself to the prayers of the faithful, and to the forgiveness of all whom he might have offended. " If," said he, in his last public discourse, " there be any one here whom I have struck unjustly, I submit myself to be struck by him in return ; if I have injured the reputation of any Musulman, let him in his

turn disclose all my sins ; if I have despoiled any one, behold I am ready to satisfy his claims.”— “ Yes,” replied a voice from the crowd, “ thou owest me three drachms of silver, which have never been repaid me.” Mohammed examined the debt, discharged it, and thanked his creditor for demanding it in this world, rather than at the tribunal of God. - He then enfranchised his slaves, gave minute directions for his burial, calmed the lamentations of his friends, and pronounced a benediction upon them. Till within three days of his death he continued to perform his devotions in the mosque. When, at length, he was too feeble, he charged Abubekr with this duty ; and it was thought that he thus intended to point out his old friend as his successor. But he expressed no opinion, no desire, on this subject, and seemed to leave it entirely to the decision of the assembly of the faithful. He contemplated the approach of death with perfect calmness ; but mingling to the last the doubtful pretensions of a prophet with the lively faith of an enthusiast, he repeated the words which he declared he heard from the archangel Gabriel, who visited the earth for the last time on his behalf. He repeated what he had before affirmed—that the angel of death would not bear away his soul without first solemnly asking his permission ; and this permission he granted aloud. Extended on a carpet which covered the floor, his head during his last agony rested on the bosom of Ayesha, the best beloved of his wives. He fainted from excess of pain ; but on recovering his senses, he fixed his eyes on the ceiling, and distinctly pronounced these his last words : — “ Oh God, pardon my sins ! I come to rejoin my brethren in heaven.” He expired on the 25th of May, or, according to another calculation, the 3d of June, 632.

Despair filled the breasts of his disciples throughout the city of Medina, where he breathed his last. The fiery Omar, drawing his sword, declared that he would strike off the head of the infidel who should dare to assert that the prophet was no more. But Abubekr, the

faithful friend and the earliest disciple of Mohammed, addressing himself to Omar, and to the multitude, said, "Is it Mohammed, or the God of Mohammed, that we worship? The God of Mohammed lives for ever: but his prophet was a mortal like ourselves; and, as he had predicted to us, he has undergone the common lot of humanity."

By these words the tumult was appeased; and Mohammed was buried by his kindred and by his cousin and son-in-law Ali, in the very spot where he expired.

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